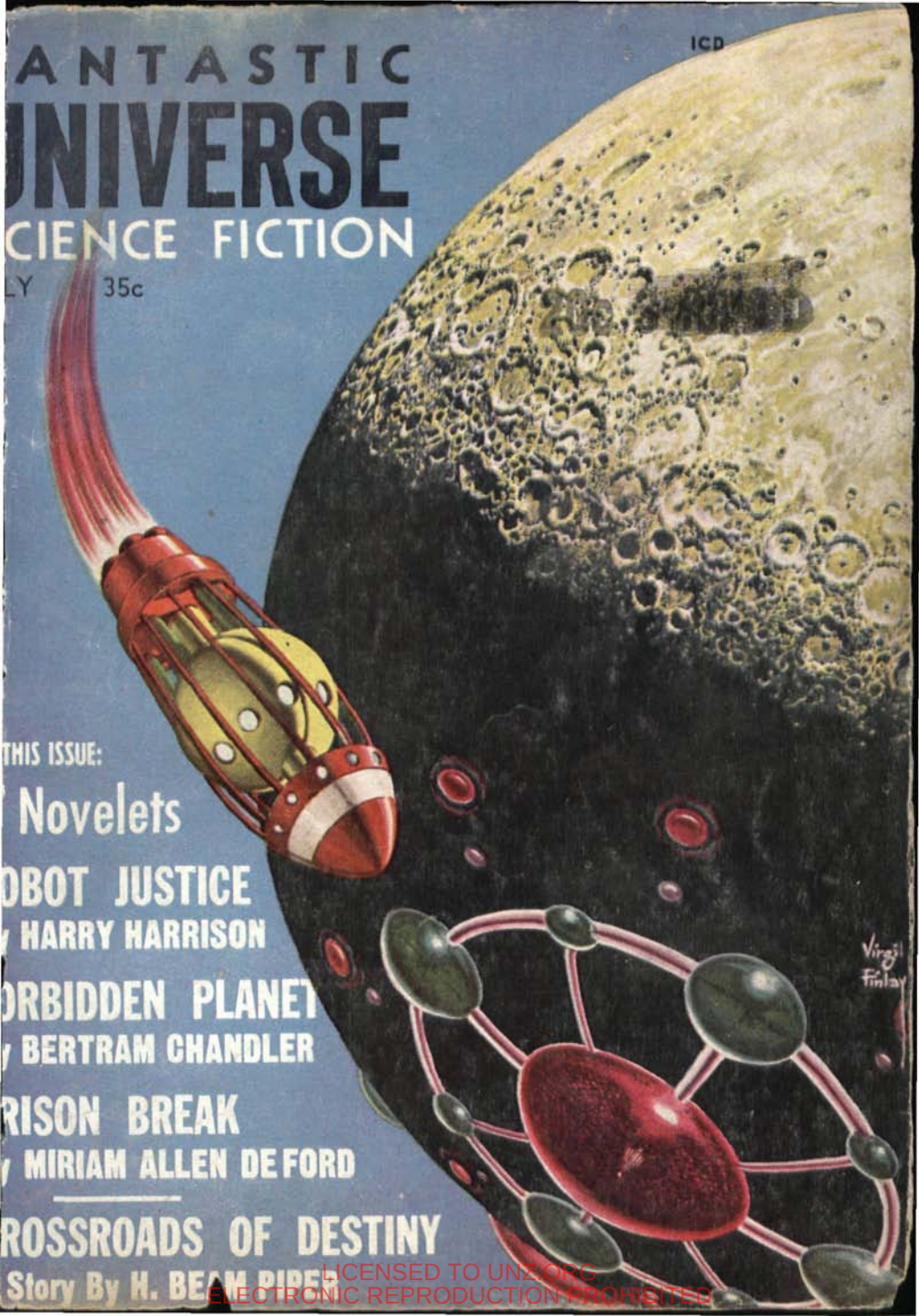

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DARK SIDE OF THE MOON

"So HOWARD MENGER was right!"

"Nonsense!" I snapped, turning my head slightly towards Rowe. There wasn't room enough in the two man scout-ship to do more. The instruments surrounded us on all sides.

"But Johnny, I am afraid he *was* right! Remember how he talked about the domed cities—"

"So did every science fiction writer since the thirties. And he was talking about Venus—"

"Venus—Schmenus—he and the others, back in the fifties, were talking about *both* Venus and the dark side of the Moon. People have always been fascinated by the possibility that, just beyond the horizon, there could be an alien culture, descendants of people who'd fled from dying Atlantis . . . Look at Venus. It's pretty much agreed that there's life—and intelligent life—underneath those clouds. True, we haven't gotten down there yet, but that last Venus rocket was obviously being followed very carefully from down below—you saw those flashes in the TV films yourself. And as for the dark side of the Moon, if you accept the possibility of extra-terrestrials keeping an eye on us throughout the centuries, as so many do, they've obviously got to have a base of operations, sufficiently free of the pull of the earth's gravity so they can blast off to Planet X, or wherever they do belong, without prohibitive energy costs."

I wanted to ask why they had to be extra-terrestrials—why they couldn't be survivors of whatever civilization the Moon had once known—but I never got the words out. We were over the domes we'd seen minutes earlier.

There was something strange and forbidding about these dully glowing things—a huge red center dome, looking for all the world like a gigantic air bubble—surrounded by a circle of smaller green domes—all linked to each other by what must have been roadways, all of them glowing with this strange dull light.

And nearby a similar group of—if this was what they were—bubble-cities.

I could hear Joe muttering to himself as he aimed the cameras at the bubble-cities, or whatever they were, and I maneuvered the ship just a little closer so that he—and the people back at Base—could get a better view.

There was still no sign of life down below. There was no way of telling whether there *was* life down there, for that matter. No way of telling unless, for one reason or another, whatever *was* down there would react to us.

I swung a little closer.

And closer.

And then—remember all this happened in a matter of seconds—there was a flash down there from one of the green bubbles. A flash right out into space, a beam that passed within inches of our nose cone. Or so it seemed.

I could hear Joe Rowe swear as he fell back on his reclo-seat. I couldn't help it. I had to get back on course and away—fast!

Maybe that was just a searchlight, dark-side-of-the-moon style.

And maybe it was something else. . . .

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crossroads of destiny

by . . . H. Beam Piper

I STILL have the dollar bill. It's in my box at the bank, and I think that's where it will stay. I simply won't destroy it, but I can think of nobody to whom I'd be willing to show it—certainly nobody at the college, my History Department colleagues least of all. Merely to tell the story would brand me irredeemably as a crackpot, but crackpots are tolerated, even on college faculties. It's only when they begin producing physical evidence that they get themselves actively resented.

When I went into the club-car for a nightcap before going back to my compartment to turn in, there were five men there, sitting together.

One was an Army officer, with the insignia and badges of a Staff Intelligence colonel. Next to him was a man of about my own age, with sandy hair and a bony, Scottish looking face, who sat staring silently into a highball which he held in both hands. Across the aisle, an elderly man, who could have been a lawyer or a banker, was smoking a cigar over a glass of port, and beside him sat a plump

No wonder he'd been so interested in the talk of whether our people accepted these theories!

Readers who remember the Hon. Stephen Silk, diplomat extraordinary, in LONE STAR PLANET (FU, *March 1957), later published as* A PLANET FOR TEXANS *(Ace Books), will find the present story a challenging departure —this possibility that the history we know may not be absolute. . . .*

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and slightly too well groomed individual who had a tall colorless drink, probably gin-and-tonic. The fifth man, separated from him by a vacant chair, seemed to be dividing his attention between a book on his lap and the conversation, in which he was taking no part. I sat down beside the sandy-haired man; as I did so and rang for the waiter, the colonel was saying:

"No, that wouldn't. I can think of a better one. Suppose you have Columbus get his ships from Henry the Seventh of England and sail under the English instead of the Spanish flag. You know, he did try to get English backing, before he went to Spain, but King Henry turned him down. That could be changed."

I pricked up my ears. The period from 1492 to the Revolution is my special field of American history, and I knew, at once, the enormous difference that would have made. It was a moment later that I realized how oddly the colonel had expressed the idea, and by that time the plump man was speaking.

"Yes, that would work," he agreed. "Those kings made decisions, most of the time, on whether or not they had a hangover, or what some court favorite thought." He got out a notebook and pen and scribbled briefly. "I'll hand that to the planning staff when I get to New York. That's Henry the Seventh, not Henry the Eighth? Right. We'll fix it so that Columbus will catch him when he's in a good humor."

That was too much. I turned to the man beside me.

"What goes on?" I asked. "Has somebody invented a time machine?"

He looked up from the drink he was contemplating and gave me a grin.

"Sounds like it, doesn't it? Why, no; our friend here is getting up a television program. Tell the gentleman about it," he urged the plump man across the aisle.

The waiter arrived at that moment. The plump man, who seemed to need little urging, waited until I had ordered a drink and then began telling me what a positively sensational idea it was.

"We're calling it *Crossroads of Destiny,*" he said. "It'll be a series, one half-hour show a week; in each episode, we'll take some historic event and show how history could have been changed if something had happened differently. We dramatize the event up to that point just as it really happened, and then a commentary-voice comes on and announces that this is the Crossroads of Destiny; this is where history could have been completely changed. Then he gives a resumé of what really did happen, and then he says, 'But—suppose so and so had done this and that, instead of such and such.' Then we pick up the dramatization at that point, only we show it the way it might have happened. Like this thing

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about Columbus; we'll show how it could have happened, and end with Columbus wading ashore with his sword in one hand and a flag in the other, just like the painting, only it'll be the English flag, and Columbus will shout: 'I take possession of this new land in the name of His Majesty, Henry the Seventh of England!" He brandished his drink, to the visible consternation of the elderly man beside him. "And then, the sailors all sing *God Save the King.*"

"Which wasn't written till about 1745," I couldn't help mentioning.

"Huh?" The plump man looked startled. "Are you sure?" Then he decided that I was, and shrugged. "Well, they can all shout, 'God Save King Henry!' or 'St. George for England!' or something. Then, at the end, we introduce the program guest, some history expert, a real name, and he tells how he thinks history would have been changed if it had happened this way."

The conservatively dressed gentleman beside him wanted to know how long he expected to keep the show running.

"The crossroads will give out before long," he added.

"The sponsor'll give out first," I said. "History is just one damn crossroads after another." I mentioned, in passing, that I taught the subject. "Why, since the beginning of this century, we've had enough of them to keep the show running for a year."

"We have about twenty already written and ready to produce," the plump man said comfortably, "and ideas for twice as many that the planning staff is working on now."

The elderly man accepted that and took another cautious sip of wine.

"What I wonder, though, is whether you can really say that history can be changed."

"Well, of course—" The television man was taken aback; one always seems to be when a basic assumption is questioned. "Of course, we only know what really did happen, but it stands to reason if something had happened differently, the results would have been different, doesn't it?"

"But it seems to me that everything would work out the same in the long run. There'd be some differences at the time, but over the years wouldn't they all cancel out?"

"Non, non, Monsieur!" the man with the book, who had been outside the conversation until now, told him earnestly. "Make no mistake; 'istoree can be shange'!"

I looked at him curiously. The accent sounded French, but it wasn't quite right. He was some kind of a foreigner, though; I'd swear that he never bought the clothes he was wearing in this country. The way the suit fitted, and the cut of it, and the shirt-collar, and the necktie. The book he was reading was Langmuir's *Social History of the American People*—not one of my favorites, a bit too much

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on the doctrinaire side, but what a bookshop clerk would give a foreigner looking for something to explain America.

"What do you think, Professor?" the plump man was asking me.

"It would work out the other way. The differences wouldn't cancel out; they'd accumulate. Say something happened a century ago, to throw a presidential election the other way. You'd get different people at the head of the government, opposite lines of policy taken, and eventually we'd be getting into different wars with different enemies at different times, and different batches of young men killed before they could marry and have families —different people being born or not being born. That would mean different ideas, good or bad, being advanced; different books written; different inventions, and different social and economic problems as a consequence."

"Look, he's only giving himself a century," the colonel added. "Think of the changes if this thing we were discussing, Columbus sailing under the English flag, had happened. Or suppose Leif Ericson had been able to plant a permanent colony in America in the Eleventh Century, or if the Saracens had won the Battle of Tours. Try to imagine the world today if any of those things had happened. One thing you can be sure of—any errors you make in trying to imagine such a world will be on the side of overconservatism."

The sandy-haired man beside me, who had been using his highball for a crystal ball, must have glimpsed in it what he was looking for. He finished the drink, set the empty glass on the stand-tray beside him, and reached back to push the button.

"I don't think you realize just how good an idea you have, here," he told the plump man abruptly. "If you did, you wouldn't ruin it with such timid and unimaginative treatment."

I thought he'd been staying out of the conversation because it was over his head. Instead, he had been taking the plump man's idea apart, examining all the pieces, and considering what was wrong with it and how it could be improved. The plump man looked startled, and then angry—timid and unimaginative were the last things he'd expected his idea to be called. Then he became uneasy. Maybe this fellow was a typical representative of his lord and master, the faceless abstraction called the Public.

"What do you mean?" he asked.

"Misplaced emphasis. You shouldn't emphasize the event that could have changed history; you should emphasize the changes that could have been made. You're going to end this show you were talking about with a shot of Columbus wading up to the beach with an English flag, aren't you?"

"Well, that's the logical ending."

"That's the logical beginning,"

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the sandy-haired man contradicted. "And after that, your guest historian comes on; how much time will he be allowed?"

"Well, maybe three or four minutes. We can't cut the dramatization too short—"

"And he'll have to explain, a couple of times, and in words of one syllable, that what we have seen didn't really happen, because if he doesn't, the next morning half the twelve-year-old kids in the country will be rushing wild-eyed into school to slip the teacher the real inside about the discovery of America. By the time he gets that done, he'll be able to mumble a couple of generalities about vast and incalculable effects, and then it'll be time to tell the public about Widgets, the really safe cigarettes, all filter and absolutely free from tobacco."

The waiter arrived at this point, and the sandy-haired man ordered another rye highball. I decided to have another bourbon on the rocks, and the TV impresario said, "Gin-and-tonic," absently, and went into a reverie which lasted until the drinks arrived. Then he came awake again.

"I see what you mean," he said. "Most of the audience would wonder what difference it would have made where Columbus would have gotten his ships, as long as he got them and America got discovered. I can see it would have made a hell of a big difference. But how could it be handled any other way? How could you figure out just what the difference would have been?"

"Well, you need a man who'd know the historical background, and you'd need a man with a powerful creative imagination, who is used to using it inside rigorously defined limits. Don't try to get them both in one; a collaboration would really be better. Then you work from the known situation in Europe and in America in 1492, and decide on the immediate effects. And from that, you have to carry it along, step by step, down to the present. It would be a lot of hard and very exacting work, but the result would be worth it." He took a sip from his glass and added: "Remember, you don't have to prove that the world today would be the way you set it up. All you have to do is make sure that nobody else would be able to prove that it wouldn't."

"Well, how could you present that?"

"As a play, with fictional characters and a plot; time, the present, under the changed conditions. The plot—the reason the coward conquers his fear and becomes a hero, the obstacle to the boy marrying the girl, the reason the innocent man is being persecuted—will have to grow out of this imaginary world you've constructed, and be impossible in our real world. As long as you stick to that, you're all right."

"Sure. I get that." The plump man was excited again; he was

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about half sold on the idea. "But how will we get the audience to accept it? We're asking them to start with an assumption they know isn't true."

"Maybe it is, in another time-dimension," the colonel suggested. "You can't prove it isn't. For that matter, you can't prove there aren't other time-dimensions."

"Hah, that's it!" the sandy-haired man exclaimed. "World of alternate probability. That takes care of that."

He drank about a third of his highball and sat gazing into the rest of it, in an almost yogic trance. The plump man looked at the colonel in bafflement.

"Maybe this alternate-probability time-dimension stuff means something to you," he said. "Be damned if it does to me."

"Well, as far as we know, we live in a four-dimensional universe," the colonel started.

The elderly man across from him groaned. "Fourth dimension! Good God, are we going to talk about that?"

"It isn't anything to be scared of. You carry an instrument for measuring in the fourth dimension all the time. A watch."

"You mean it's just time? But that isn't—"

"We know of three dimensions of space," the colonel told him, gesturing to indicate them. "We can use them for coordinates to locate things, but we also locate things in time. I wouldn't like to ride on a train or a plane if we didn't. Well, let's call the time we know, the time your watch registers, Time-A. Now, suppose the entire, infinite extent of Time-A is only an instant in another dimension of time, which we'll call Time-B. The next instant of Time-B is also the entire extent of Time-A, and the next and the next. As in Time-A, different things are happening at different instants. In one of these instants of Time-B, one of the things that's happening is that King Henry the Seventh of England is furnishing ships to Christopher Columbus."

The man with the odd clothes was getting excited again.

"Zees—'ow you say—zees alternate probabeelitay; eet ees a theory zhenerally accept' een zees countree?"

"Got it!" the sandy-haired man said, before anybody could answer. He set his drink on the stand-tray and took a big jackknife out of his pocket, holding it unopened in his hand. "How's this sound?" he asked, and hit the edge of the tray with the back of the knife, *Bong!*

"Crossroads—of—*Destiny!*" he intoned, and hit the edge of the tray again, *Bong!* "This is the year 1959—but not the 1959 of our world, for we are in a world of alternate probability, in another dimension of time, a world parallel to and coexistent with but separate from our own, in which history has been completely altered by a single momentous event." He shifted back to his normal voice.

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"Not bad; only twenty-five seconds," the plump man said, looking up from his wrist watch. "And a trained announcer could maybe shave five seconds off that. Yes, something like that, and at the end we'll have another thirty seconds, and we can do without the guest."

"But zees alternate probibeelitay, in anozzer dimension," the stranger was insisting. "Ees zees a concept original weet you?" he asked the colonel.

"Oh, no; that idea's been around for a long time."

"I never heard of it before now," the elderly man said, as though that completely demolished it.

"Zen eet ees zhenerally accept' by zee scienteest'?"

"Umm, no," the sandy-haired man relieved the colonel. "There's absolutely no evidence to support it, and scientists don't accept unsupported assumptions unless they need them to explain something, and they don't need this assumption for anything. Well, it would come in handy to make some of these reports of freak phenomena, like mysterious appearances and disappearances, or flying-object sightings, or reported falls of non-meteoric matter, theoretically respectable. Reports like that usually get the ignore-and-forget treatment, now."

"Zen you believe zat zeese ozzer world of zee alternate probabeelitay, zey exist?"

"No. I don't disbelieve it, either. I've no reason to, one way or another." He studied his drink for a moment, and lowered the level in the glass slightly. "I've said that once in a while things get reported that look as though such other worlds, in another time-dimension, may exist. There have been whole books published by people who collect stories like that. I must say that academic science isn't very hospitable to them."

"You mean, zings sometimes, 'ow-you-say, leak in from one of zees ozzer worlds? Zat has been known to 'appen?"

"Things have been said to have happened that might, if true, be cases of things leaking through from another time world," the sandy-haired man corrected. "Or leaking away to another time world." He mentioned a few of the more famous cases of unexplained mysteries—the English diplomat in Prussia who vanished in plain sight of a number of people, the ship found completely deserted by her crew, the lifeboats all in place; stories like that. "And there's this rash of alleged sightings of unidentified flying objects. I'd sooner believe that they came from another dimension than from another planet. But, as far as I know, nobody's seriously advanced this other-time-dimension theory to explain them."

"I think the idea's familiar enough, though, that we can use it as an explanation, or pseudo-explanation, for the program," the television man said. "Fact is, we aren't married to this Crossroads

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title, yet; we could just as easily call it *Fifth Dimension.* That would lead the public to expect something out of the normal before the show started."

That got the conversation back onto the show, and we talked for some time about it, each of us suggesting possibilities. The stranger even suggested one—that the Civil War had started during the Jackson Administration. Fortunately, nobody else noticed that. Finally, a porter came through and inquired if any of us were getting off at Harrisburg, saying that we would be getting in in five minutes.

The stranger finished his drink hastily and got up, saying that he would have to get his luggage. He told us how much he had enjoyed the conversation, and then followed the porter toward the rear of the train. After he had gone out, the TV man chuckled.

"Was that one an oddball!" he exclaimed. "Where the hell do you suppose he got that suit?"

"It was a tailored suit," the colonel said. "A very good one. And I can't think of any country in the world in which they cut suits just like that. And did you catch his accent?"

"Phony," the television man pronounced. "The French accent of a Greek waiter in a fake French restaurant. In the Bronx."

"Not quite. The pronunciation was all right for French accent, but the cadence, the way the word-sounds were strung together, was German."

The elderly man looked at the colonel keenly. "I see you're Intelligence," he mentioned. "Think he might be somebody up your alley, Colonel?"

The colonel shook his head. "I doubt it. There are agents of unfriendly powers in this country—a lot of them, I'm sorry to have to say. But they don't speak accented English, and they don't dress eccentrically. You know there's an enemy agent in a crowd, pick out the most normally American type in sight and you usually won't have to look further."

The train ground to a stop. A young couple with hand-luggage came in and sat at one end of the car, waiting until other accommodations could be found for them. After a while, it started again. I dallied over my drink, and then got up and excused myself, saying that I wanted to turn in early.

In the next car behind, I met the porter who had come in just before the stop. He looked worried, and after a moment's hesitation, he spoke to me.

"Pardon, sir. The man in the club-car who got off at Harrisburg; did you know him?"

"Never saw him before. Why?"

"He tipped me with a dollar bill when he got off. Later, I looked closely at it. I do not like it."

He showed it to me, and I didn't blame him. It was marked *One Dollar,* and *United States of Amer-*

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ica, but outside that there wasn't a thing right about it. One side was gray, all right, but the other side was green. The picture wasn't the right one. And there were a lot of other things about it, some of them absolutely ludicrous. It wasn't counterfeit—it wasn't even an imitation of a United States bill.

And then it hit me, like a bullet in the chest. Not a bill of *our* United States. No wonder he had been so interested in whether our scientists accepted the theory of other time dimensions and other worlds of alternate probability!

On an impulse, I got out two ones and gave them to the porter —perfectly good United States Bank gold-certificates.

"You'd better let me keep this," I said, trying to make it sound the way he'd think a Federal Agent would say it. He took the bills, smiling, and I folded his bill and put it into my vest pocket.

"Thank you, sir," he said. "I have no wish to keep it."

Some part of my mind below the level of consciousness must have taken over and guided me back to the right car and compartment; I didn't realize where I was going till I put on the light and recognized my own luggage. Then I sat down, as dizzy as though the two drinks I had had, had been a dozen. For a moment, I was tempted to rush back to the club-car and show the thing to the colonel and the sandy-haired man. On second thought, I decided against that.

The next thing I banished from my mind was the adjective "incredible." I had to credit it; I had the proof in my vest pocket. The coincidence arising from our topic of conversation didn't bother me too much, either. It was the topic which had drawn him into it. And, as the sandy-haired man had pointed out, we know nothing, one way or another, about these other worlds; we certainly don't know what barriers separate them from our own, or how often those barriers may fail. I might have thought more about that if I'd been in physical science. I wasn't; I was in American history. So what I thought about was what sort of country that other United States must be, and what its history must have been.

The man's costume was basically the same as ours—same general style, but many little differences of fashion. I had the impression that it was the costume of a less formal and conservative society than ours and a more casual way of life. It could be the sort of costume into which ours would evolve in another thirty or so years. There was another odd thing. I'd noticed him looking curiously at both the waiter and the porter, as though something about them surprised him. The only thing they had in common was their race, the same as every other passenger-car attendant. But he wasn't used to seeing Chinese working in railway cars.

And there had been that remark about the Civil War and the Jack-

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son Administration. I wondered what Jackson he had been talking about; not Andrew Jackson, the Tennessee militia general who got us into war with Spain in 1810, I hoped. And the Civil War; that baffled me completely. I wondered if it had been a class-war, or a sectional conflict. We'd had plenty of the latter, during our first century, but all of them had been settled peacefully and Constitutionally. Well, some of the things he'd read in Langmuir's *Social History* would be surprises for him, too.

And then I took the bill out for another examination. It must have gotten mixed with his spendable money—it was about the size of ours—and I wondered how he had acquired enough of our money to pay his train fare. Maybe he'd had a diamond and sold it, or maybe he'd had a gun and held somebody up. If he had, I didn't know that I blamed him, under the circumstances. I had an idea that he had some realization of what had happened to him—the book, and the fake accent, to cover any mistakes he might make. Well, I wished him luck, and then I unfolded the dollar bill and looked at it again.

In the first place, it had been issued by the United States Department of Treasury itself, not the United States Bank or one of the State Banks. I'd have to think over the implications of that carefully. In the second place, it was a silver certificate; why, in this other United States, silver must be an acceptable monetary metal; maybe equally so with gold, though I could hardly believe that. Then I looked at the picture on the gray obverse side, and had to strain my eyes on the fine print under it to identify it. It was Washington, all right, but a much older Washington than any of the pictures of him I had ever seen. Then I realized that I knew just where the Crossroads of Destiny for his world and mine had been.

As every schoolchild among us knows, General George Washington was shot dead at the Battle of Germantown, in 1777, by an English, or, rather, Scottish, officer, Patrick Ferguson—the same Patrick Ferguson who invented the breech-loading rifle that smashed Napoleon's armies. Washington, today, is one of our lesser national heroes, because he was our first military commander-in-chief. But in this other world, he must have survived to lead our armies to victory and become our first President, as was the case with the man who took his place when he was killed.

I folded the bill and put it away carefully among my identification cards, where it wouldn't a second time get mixed with the money I spent, and as I did, I wondered what sort of a President George Washington had made, and what part, in the history of that other United States, had been played by the man whose picture appears on our dollar bills—General and President Benedict Arnold.

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robot justice

by . . . Harry Harrison

He had never planned to be caught and never considered the consequences. Fear made him stumble as they neared.

THE judge was impressive in his black robes, and omniscient in the chromium perfection of his skull. His voice rolled like the crack of doom; rich and penetrating.

"Carl Tritt, this court finds you guilty as charged. On 218, 2423 you did willfully and maliciously steal the payroll of the Marcrix Corporation, a sum totaling 318,000 cr., and did attempt to keep these same credits as your own. The sentence is twenty years."

The black gavel fell with the precision of a pile driver; the sound bounced back and forth inside Carl's head. Twenty years. He clamped bloodless fingers on the steel bar of justice and looked up into the judge's electronic eyes. There was perhaps a glint of compassion, but no mercy there. The sentence had been passed and recorded in the Central Memory. There was no appeal.

A panel snapped open in the front of the judge's bench and exhibit "A" slid out on a soundless piston. 318,000 cr., still in their original pay envelopes. The judge pointed as Carl slowly picked it up.

"Here is the money you stole—

Harry Harrison, SF writer and editor, will be remembered for his ARM OF THE LAW (FU, *August 1958) and* TRAINEE FOR MARS (FU, *June 1958). He attended the 1957 World Science Fiction Convention in London and then remained in Europe, most of the time in Capri, returning recently to the States.*

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see that it is returned to the proper people."

Carl shuffled out of the courtroom, the package clutched weakly to his chest, sunk in a sodden despair. The street outside was washed with golden sunlight that he could not see, for his depression shadowed it with the deepest gloom.

His throat was sore and his eyes burned. If he had not been an adult male citizen, age 25, he might have cried. But 25-year-old adult males do not cry. Instead he swallowed heavily a few times.

A twenty-year sentence — it couldn't be believed. *Why me?* Of all the people in the world why did *he* have to receive a sentence severe as that? His well-trained conscience instantly shot back the answer. *Because you stole money.* He shied away from that unpleasant thought and stumbled on.

Unshed tears swam in his eyes and trickled back into his nose and down his throat. Forgetting in his pain where he was, he choked a bit. Then spat heavily.

Even as the saliva hit the spotless sidewalk, a waste can twenty feet away stirred into life. It rotated on hidden wheels and soundlessly rolled towards him. In shocked horror Carl pressed the back of his hand to his mouth. Too late to stop what was already done.

A flexible arm licked out and quickly swabbed the sidewalk clean. Then the can squatted like a mechanical Buddha while a speaker rasped to life in its metal insides. A tinny metallic voice addressed Carl.

"Carl Tritt, you have violated Local Ordinance #bd-14-668 by expectorating on a public sidewalk. The sentence is two days. Your total sentence is now twenty years and two days."

Two other pedestrians had stopped behind Carl, listening with gaping mouths as sentence was passed. Carl could almost hear their thoughts. *A sentenced man. Think of that! Over twenty years sentence!* They bugged their eyes at him in a mixture of fascination and distaste.

Carl rushed away, the package clutched to him and his face flushed red with shame. The sentenced men on video had always seemed so funny. How they fell down and acted bewildered when a door wouldn't open for them.

It didn't seem so funny now.

The rest of that day crept by in a fog of dejection. He had a vague recollection of his visit to the Marcrix Corporation to return his stolen money. They had been kind and understanding, and he had fled in embarrassment. All the kindness in the world wouldn't reprieve his sentence.

He wandered vaguely in the streets after that, until he was exhausted. Then he had seen the bar. Bright lights with a fog of smoke inside, looking cheery and warm. Carl had pushed at the door, and pushed again. While the people in-

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side had stopped talking and turned to watch him through the glass. Then he had remembered the sentence and realized the door wouldn't open. The people inside had started laughing and he had run away. Lucky to get off without a further sentence.

When he reached his apartment at last he was sobbing with fatigue and unhappiness. The door opened to his thumb and slammed behind him. This was a refuge at last.

Until he saw his packed bags waiting for him.

Carl's video set hummed into life. He had never realized before it could be controlled from a Central. The screen stayed dark but the familiar voder voice of Sentence Control poured out.

"A selection of clothing and articles suitable for a sentenced man has been chosen for you. Your new address is on your bags. Go there at once."

It was too much. Carl knew without looking that his camera and his books and model rockets—the hundred other little things that meant something to him—were not included in those bags. He ran into the kitchen, forcing open the resisting door. The voice spoke from a speaker concealed above the stove.

"What you are doing is in violation of the law. If you stop at once your sentence will not be increased."

The words meant nothing to him, he didn't want to hear them. With frantic fingers he pulled the cupboard open and reached for the bottle of whiskey in the back. The bottle vanished through a trap door he had never noticed before, brushing tantalizingly against his fingers as it dropped.

He stumbled down the hall and the voice droned on behind him. Five more days sentence for attempting to obtain alcoholic beverages. Carl couldn't have cared less.

The cabs and buses wouldn't stop for him and the subslide turnstile spat his coin back like something distasteful. In the end he tottered the long blocks to his new quarters, located in a part of town he had never known existed.

There was a calculated seediness about the block where he was to stay. Deliberately cracked sidewalks and dim lights. The dusty spiderwebs that hung in every niche had a definitely artificial look about them. He had to climb two flights of stairs, each step of which creaked with a different note, to reach his room. Without turning the light on he dropped his bags and stumbled forward. His shins cracked against a metal bed and he dropped gratefully into it. A blissful exhaustion put him to sleep.

When he awoke in the morning he didn't want to open his eyes. It had been a nightmare, he tried to tell himself, and he was out of it now. But the chill air in the room and the gray light filtering through his lids told him differently. With a sigh he abandoned the fantasy

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and looked around at his new home.

It was clean—and that was all that could be said for it. The bed, a chair, a built-in chest of drawers —these were the furnishings. A single unshielded bulb hung from the ceiling. On the wall opposite him was a large metal calendar sign. It read: *20 years, 5 days, 17 hours, 25 minutes.* While he watched the sign gave an audible click and the last number changed to 24.

Carl was too exhausted by the emotions of the previous day to care. The magnitude of his change still overwhelmed him. He settled back onto the bed in a half daze, only to be jolted up by a booming voice from the wall.

"Breakfast is now being served in the public dining room on the floor above. You have ten minutes." The now familiar voice came this time from a giant speaker at least 5 feet across. And had lost all of its tinny quality. Carl obeyed without thinking twice.

The meal was drab but filling. There were other men and women in the dining room, all very interested in their food. He realized with a start that they were sentenced too. After that he kept his own eyes on his plate and returned quickly to his room.

As he entered the door the video pickup was pointing at him from above the speaker. It followed him like a gun as he walked across the room. Like the speaker, it was the biggest pickup he had ever seen; a swiveled chrome tube with a glass eye on its end as big as his fist. A sentenced man is alone, yet never has privacy.

Without preliminary warning the speaker blasted and he gave a nervous start.

"Your new employment begins at 1800 hours today, here is the address." A card leaped out of a slot below the calendar sign and dropped to the floor. Carl had to bend over and scratch at its edges to pick it up. The address meant nothing to him.

He had hours of time before he had to be there, and nothing else to do. The bed was nearby and inviting, he dropped wearily onto it.

Why had he stolen that damned payroll? He knew the answer. Because he had wanted things he could never afford on a telephone technician's salary. It had looked so tempting and fool proof. He damned the accident that had led him to it. The memory still tortured him.

It had been a routine addition of lines in one of the large office buildings.

When he went there he had been by himself, he would not need the robots until after the preliminary survey was done. The phone circuits were in a service corridor just off the main lobby. His pass key let him in through the inconspicuous door and he switched on the light. A maze of wiring and junction boxes covered one wall, lead-

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ing to cables that vanished down the corridor out of sight. Carl opened his wiring diagrams and began to trace leads. The rear wall seemed to be an ideal spot to attach the new boxes and he tapped it to see if it could take the heavy bolts. It was hollow.

Carl's first reaction was disgust. The job would be twice as difficult if the leads had to be extended. Then he felt a touch of curiosity as to what the wall was there for. It was just a panel he noticed on closer inspection, made up of snap-on sections fitted into place. With his screwdriver he pried one section out and saw what looked like a steel grid supporting metal plates. He had no idea of what their function was, and didn't really care now that his mild curiosity had been settled. After slipping the panel back into place he went on with his work. A few hours later he looked at his watch, then dropped his tools for lunch.

The first thing he saw when he stepped back into the lobby was the bank cart.

Walking as close as he was, Carl couldn't help but notice the two guards who were taking thick envelopes from the cart and putting them into a bank of lockers set into the wall. One envelope to each locker, then a slam of the thick door to seal it shut. Besides a momentary pang at the sight of all that money Carl had no reaction.

Only when he came back from lunch did he stop suddenly as a thought struck him. He hesitated a fraction of a moment, then went on. No one had noticed him. As he entered the corridor again he looked surreptitiously at the messenger who was opening one of the lockers. When Carl had closed the door behind him and checked the relative position of the wall with his eyes he knew he was right.

What he had thought was a metal grid with plates was really the backs of the lockers and their framework of supports. The carefully sealed lockers in the lobby had unguarded backs that faced into the service corridor.

He realized at once that he should do nothing at the time, nor act in any way to arouse suspicion. He did, however, make sure that the service robots came in through the other end of the corridor that opened onto a deserted hallway at the rear of the building where he had made a careful examination of the hall. Carl even managed to make himself forget about the lockers for over six months.

After that he began to make his plans. Casual observation at odd times gave him all the facts he needed. The lockers contained payrolls for a number of large companies in the building. The bank guards deposited the money at noon every Friday. No envelopes were ever picked up before one P.M. at the earliest. Carl noticed what seemed to be the thickest envelope and made his plans accordingly.

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Everything went like clockwork. At ten minutes to twelve on a Friday he finished a job he was working on and left. He carried his toolbox with him. Exactly ten minutes later he entered the rear door of the corridor without being seen. His hands were covered with transparent and nearly invisible gloves. By 12:10 he had the panel off and the blade of a long screwdriver pressed against the back of the selected locker; the handle of the screwdriver held to the bone behind his ear. There was no sound of closing doors so he knew the bank men had finished and gone.

The needle flame of his torch ate through the steel panel like soft cheese. He excised a neat circle of metal and pulled it free. Beating out a smoldering spot on the money envelope, he transferred it to another envelope from his toolbox. This envelope he had addressed to himself and was already stamped. One minute after leaving the building he would have the envelope in the mail and would be a rich man.

Carefully checking, he put all the tools and the envelope back into his toolbox and strode away. At exactly 12:35 he left through the rear corridor door and locked it behind him. The corridor was still empty, so he took the extra seconds to jimmy the door open with a tool from his pocket. Plenty of people had keys to that door, but it didn't hurt to widen the odds a bit.

Carl was actually whistling when he walked out into the street.

Then the peace officer took him by the arm.

"You are under arrest for theft," the officer told him in a calm voice.

The shock stopped him in his tracks and he almost wished it had stopped his heart the same way. He had never planned to be caught and never considered the consequences. Fear and shame made him stumble as the policeman led him to the waiting car. The crowd watched in fascinated amazement.

When the evidence had been produced at his trial he found out, a little late, what his mistake had been. Because of the wiring and conduits in the corridor it was equipped with infra-red thermocouples. The heat of his torch had activated the alarm and an observer at Fire Central had looked through one of their video pickups in the tunnel. He had expected to see a short circuit and had been quite surprised to see Carl removing the money. His surprise had not prevented him from notifying the police. Carl had cursed fate under his breath.

The grating voice of the speaker cut through Carl's bad-tasting memories.

"1730 hours. It is time for you to leave for your employment."

Wearily, Carl pulled on his shoes, checked the address, and left for his new job. It took him

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almost the full half hour to walk there. He wasn't surprised in the slightest when the address turned out to be the Department of Sanitation.

"You'll catch on fast," the elderly and worn supervisor told him. "Just go through this list and kind of get acquainted with it. Your truck will be along in a moment."

The list was in reality a thick volume of lists, of all kinds of waste materials. Apparently everything in the world that could be discarded was in the book. And each item was followed by a key number. These numbers ran from one to thirteen and seemed to be the entire purpose of the volume. While Carl was puzzling over their meaning there was the sudden roar of a heavy motor. A giant robot-operated truck pulled up the ramp and ground to a stop near them.

"Garbage truck," the supervisor said wearily. "She's all yours."

Carl had always known there were garbage trucks, but of course he had never seen one. It was a bulky, shining cylinder over twenty metres long. A robot driver was built into the cab. Thirty other robots stood on foot-steps along the sides. The supervisor led the way to the rear of the truck and pointed to the gaping mouth of the receiving bin.

"Robots pick up the garbage and junk and load it in there," he said. "Then they press one of these here thirteen buttons keying whatever they have dumped into one of the thirteen bins inside the truck. They're just plain lifting robots and not too brainy, but good enough to recognize most things they pick up. But not all the time. That's where you come in, riding along right there."

The grimy thumb was now aiming at a transparent-walled cubicle that also projected from the back of the truck. There was a padded seat inside, facing a shelf set with thirteen buttons.

"You sit there, just as cozy as a bug in a rug I might say, ready to do your duty at any given moment. Which is whenever one of the robots finds something it can't identify straight off. So it puts whatever it is into the hopper outside your window. You give it a good look, check the list for the proper category if you're not sure, then press the right button and in she goes. It may sound difficult at first, but you'll soon catch onto the ropes."

"Oh, it sounds complicated all right," Carl said, with a dull feeling in his gut as he climbed into his turret, "But I'll try and get used to it."

The weight of his body closed a hidden switch in the chair, and the truck growled forward. Carl scowled down unhappily at the roadway streaming out slowly from behind the wheels, as he rode into the darkness, sitting in his transparent boil on the back-side of the truck.

It was dull beyond imagining. The garbage truck followed a programmed route that led through

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the commercial and freightways of the city. There were few other trucks moving at that hour of the night, and they were all robot driven. Carl saw no other human being. He *was* snug as a bug. A human flea being whirled around inside the complex machine of the city. Every few minutes the truck would stop, the robots clatter off, then return with their loads. The containers dumped, the robots leaped back to their foot-plates, and the truck was off once more.

An hour passed before he had his first decision to make. A robot stopped in mid-dump, ground its gears a moment, then dropped a dead cat into Carl's hopper. Carl stared at it with horror. The cat stared back with wide, sightless eyes, its lips drawn back in a fierce grin. It was the first corpse Carl had ever seen. Something heavy had dropped on the cat, reducing the lower part of its body to paper-thinness. With an effort he wrenched his eyes away and jerked the book open.

Castings . . . Cast Iron . . . Cats (dead) . . . Very, very much dead. There was the bin number. Nine. One bin per life. After the ninth life—the ninth bin. He didn't find the thought very funny. A fierce jab at button 9 and the cat whisked from sight with a last flourish of its paw. He repressed the sudden desire to wave back.

After the cat boredom set in with a vengeance. Hours dragged slowly by and still his hopper was empty. The truck rumbled forward and stopped. Forward and stop. The motion lulled him and he was tired. He leaned forward and laid his head gently on the list of varieties of garbage, his eyes closed.

"Sleeping is forbidden while at work. This is warning number one."

The hatefully familiar voice blasted from behind his head and he started with surprise. He hadn't noticed the pickup and speaker next to the door. Even here, riding a garbage truck to eternity, the machine watched him. Bitter anger kept him awake for the duration of the round.

Days came and went after that in a gray monotony, the calendar on the wall of his room ticking them off one by one. But not fast enough. It now read 19 years, 322 days, 8 hours, 16 minutes. Not fast enough. There was no more interest in his life. As a sentenced man there were very few things he could do in his free time. All forms of entertainment were closed to him. He could gain admittance—through a side door—to only a certain section of the library. After one futile trip there, pawing through the inspirational texts and moral histories, he never returned.

Each night he went to work. After returning he slept as long as he could. After that he just lay on his bed, smoking his tiny allotment of cigarettes, and listening to the sec-

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onds being ticked off his sentence.

Carl tried to convince himself that he could stand twenty years of this kind of existence. But a growing knot of tension in his stomach told him differently.

This was before the accident. The accident changed everything.

A night like any other night. The garbage truck stopped at an industrial site and the robots scurried out for their loads. Nearby was a cross-country tanker, taking on some liquid through a flexible hose. Carl gave it bored notice only because there was a human driver in the cab of the truck. That meant the cargo was dangerous in some way, robot drivers being forbidden by law from handling certain loads. He idly noticed the driver open the door and start to step out. When the man was halfway out he remembered something, turned back and reached for it.

For a short moment the driver brushed against the starter button. The truck was in gear and lurched forward a few feet. The man quickly pulled away—but it was too late.

The movement had been enough to put a strain on the hose. It stretched—the supporting arm bent —then it broke free from the truck at the coupling. The hose whipped back and forth, spraying greenish liquid over the truck and the cab, before an automatic cut-out turned off the flow.

This had taken only an instant. The driver turned back and stared with horror-widened eyes at the fluid dripping over the truck's hood. It was steaming slightly.

With a swooshing roar it burst into fire, and the entire front of the truck was covered with flame. The driver invisible behind the burning curtain.

Before being sentenced Carl had always worked with robot assistance. He knew what to say and how to say it to get instant obedience. Bursting from his cubicle he slapped one of the garbage robots on its metal shoulder and shouted an order. The robot dropped a can it was emptying and ran at full speed for the truck, diving into the flames.

More important than the driver, was the open port on top of the truck. If the flames should reach it the entire truck would go up—showering the street with burning liquid.

Swathed in flame, the robot climbed the ladder on the truck's side. One burning hand reached up and flipped the self-sealing lid shut. The robot started back down through the flames, but stopped suddenly as the fierce heat burned at its controls. For a few seconds it vibrated rapidly like a man in pain, then collapsed. Destroyed.

Carl was running towards the truck himself, guiding two more of his robots. The flames still wrapped the cab, seeping in through the partly open door. Thin screams of pain came from inside. Under Carl's directions one robot pulled

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the door open and the other dived in. Bent double, protecting the man's body with its own, the robot pulled the driver out. The flames had charred his legs to shapeless masses and his clothes were on fire. Carl beat out the flames with his hands as the robot dragged the driver clear.

The instant the fire had started, automatic alarms had gone off. Fire and rescue teams plunged toward the scene. Carl had just put out the last of the flames on the unconscious man's body when they arrived. A wash of foam instantly killed the fire. An ambulance jerked to a stop and two robot stretcher-bearers popped out of it. A human doctor followed. He took one look at the burned driver and whistled.

"Really cooked!"

He grabbed a pressurized container from the stretcher-bearer and sprayed jelly-like burn dressing over the driver's legs. Before he had finished the other robot snapped open a medical kit and proffered it. The doctor made quick adjustments on a multiple syringe, then gave the injection. It was all very fast and efficient.

As soon as the stretcher-bearers had carried the burned driver into the ambulance, it jumped forward. The doctor mumbled instruction to the hospital into his lapel radio. Only then did he turn his attention to Carl.

"Let's see those hands," he said.

Everything had happened with such speed that Carl had scarcely noticed his burns. Only now did he glance down at the scorched skin and feel sharp pain. The blood drained from his face and he swayed.

"Easy does it," the doctor said, helping him sit down on the ground. "They're not as bad as they look. Have new skin on them in a couple of days." His hands were busy while he talked and there was the sudden prick of a needle in Carl's arm. The pain ebbed away.

The shot made things hazy after that. Carl had vague memories of riding to the hospital in a police car. Then the grateful comfort of a cool bed. They must have given him another shot then because the next thing he knew it was morning.

That week in the hospital was like a vacation for Carl. Either the staff didn't know of his sentenced status or it didn't make any difference. He received the same treatment as the other patients. While the accelerated grafts covered his hands and forearms with new skin, he relaxed in the luxury of the soft bed and varied food. The same drugs that kept the pain away prevented his worry about returning to the outside world. He was also pleased to hear that the burned driver would recover.

On the morning of the eighth day the staff dermatologist prodded the new skin and smiled. "Good job of recovery, Tritt," he said.

"Looks like you'll be leaving us today. I'll have them fill out the

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forms and send for your clothes."

The old knot of tension returned to Carl's stomach as he thought of what waited for him outside. It seemed doubly hard now that he had been away for a few days. Yet there was nothing else he could possibly do. He dressed as slowly as he could, stretching the free time remaining as much as possible.

As he started down the corridor a nurse waved him over. "Mr. Skarvy would like to see you—in here."

Skarvy. That was the name of the truck driver. Carl followed her into the room where the burly driver sat up in bed. His big body looked strange somehow, until Carl realized there was no long bulge under the blankets. The man had no legs.

"Chopped 'em both off at the hips," Skarvy said when he noticed Carl's gaze. He smiled. "Don't let it bother you. Don't bother me none. They planted the regen-buds and they tell me in less than a year I'll have legs again, good as new. Suits me fine. Better than staying in that truck and frying." He hitched himself up in the bed, an intense expression on his face.

"They showed me the films Fire Central made through one of their pick-ups on the spot. Saw the whole thing. Almost upchucked when I saw what I looked like when you dragged me out." He pushed out a meaty hand and pumped Carl's. "I want to thank you for doing what you done. Taking a chance like that." Carl could only smile foolishly.

"I want to shake your hand," Skarvy said. "Even if you are a sentenced man."

Carl pulled his hand free and left. Not trusting himself to say anything. The last week *had* been a dream. And a foolish one. He was still sentenced and would be for years to come. An outcast of society who never left it.

When he pushed open the door to his drab room the all too-familiar voice boomed out of the speaker.

"Carl Tritt. You have missed seven days of your work assignment, in addition there is an incomplete day, only partially worked. This time would normally not be deducted from your sentence. There is however precedent in allowing deduction of this time and it will be allowed against your total sentence." The decision made, the numbers clicked over busily on his calendar.

"Thanks for nothing," Carl said and dropped wearily on his bed. The monotonous voder voice went on, ignoring his interruption.

"In addition, an award has been made. Under Sentence Diminution Regulations your act of personal heroism, risking your own life to save another's, is recognized as a pro-social act and so treated. The award is three years off your sentence."

Carl was on his feet, staring un-

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believingly at the speaker. Was it some trick? Yet as he watched the calendar mechanism ground gears briefly and the year numbers slowly turned over. 18 . . . 17 . . . 16 . . . The whirring stopped.

Just like that. Three years off his sentence. It didn't seem possible—yet there were the numbers to prove that it was.

"Sentence Control!" he shouted. "Listen to me! What happened? I mean how can a sentence be reduced by this award business? I never heard anything about it before?"

"Sentence reduction is never mentioned in public life," the speaker said flatly. "This might encourage people to break the law, since threat of sentence is considered a deterrent. Normally a sentenced person is not told of sentence reduction until after their first year. Your case however is exceptional since you were awarded reduction before the end of said year."

"How can I find out more about sentence reduction?" Carl asked eagerly.

The speaker hummed for a moment, then the voice crackled out again. "Your Sentence Advisor is Mr. Prisbi. He will advise you in whatever is to be done. You have an appointment for 1300 hours tomorrow. Here is his address."

The machine clicked and spat out a card. Carl was waiting for it this time and caught it before it hit the floor. He held it carefully, almost lovingly. Three years off his sentence and tomorrow he would find out what else he could do to reduce it even more.

Of course he was early, almost a full hour before he was due. The robot-receptionist kept him seated in the outer office until the exact minute of his appointment. When he heard the door lock finally click open he almost jumped to it. Forcing himself to go slow, he entered the office.

Prisbi, the Sentence Advisor, looked like a preserved fish peering through the bottom of a bottle. He was dumpy fat, with dead white skin and lumpy features that looked like they had been squeezed up like putty from the fat underneath. His eyes were magnified pupils that peered unblinkingly through eyeglass lenses almost as thick as they were wide. In a world where contact lenses were the norm, his vision was so bad it could not be corrected by the tiny lenses. Instead he wore the heavy-framed, anachronistic spectacles, perched insecurely on his puffy nose.

Prisbi did not smile or say a word when Carl entered the door. He kept his eyes fixed steadily on him as he walked the length of the room. They reminded Carl of the video scanners he had grown to hate, and he shook the idea away.

"My name is . . ." he began.

"I know your name, Tritt," Prisbi rasped. The voice seemed too coarse to have come from those soft lips. "Now sit down in that chair

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—there." He jerked his pen at a hard metal chair that faced his desk.

Carl sat down and immediately blinked from the strong lights that focused on his face. He tried to slide the chair back, until he realized it was fastened to the floor. He just sat then and waited for Prisbi to begin.

Prisbi finally lowered his glassy gaze and picked up a file of papers from his desk. He riffled through them for a full minute before speaking.

"Very strange record, Tritt," he finally grated out. "Can't say that I like it at all. Don't even know why Control gave you permission to be here. But since you are—tell me why."

It was an effort to smile but Carl did. "Well you see, I was awarded a three year reduction in sentence. This is the first I ever heard of sentence reduction. Control sent me here, said you would give me more information."

"A complete waste of time," Prisbi said, throwing the papers down onto the desk. "You aren't eligible for sentence reduction until after you've finished your first year of sentence. You have almost ten months to go. Come back then and I'll explain. You can leave."

Carl didn't move. His hands were clenched tight in his lap as he fought for control. He squinted against the light, looking at Prisbi's unresponsive face.

"But you see I have already *had* sentence reduction. Perhaps that's why Control told me to come—"

"Don't try and teach me the law," Prisbi growled coldly. "I'm here to teach it to you. All right I'll explain. Though it's of absolutely no value now. When you finish your first year of sentence—a *real* year of *work* at your assigned job—you are eligible for reduction. You may apply then for other work that carries a time premium. Dangerous jobs such as satellite repair, that take two days off your sentence for every day served. There are even certain positions in atomics that allow three days per day worked, though these are rare. In this way the sentenced man benefits himself, learns social consciousness, and benefits society at the same time. Of course this doesn't apply to you yet."

"Why not?" Carl was standing now, hammering on the table with his still tender hands. "Why do I have to finish a year at that stupid, made-work job? It's completely artificial, designed to torture, not to accomplish anything. The amount of work I do every night could be done in three seconds by a robot when the truck returned. Do you call that teaching social consciousness? Humiliating, boring work that—"

"Sit down Tritt," Prisbi shouted in a high, cracked voice. "Don't you realize where you are? Or who I am? I tell *you* what to do. You don't say anything to me outside of *yes, sir* or *no, sir*. I say you must

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finish your primary year of work, then return here. That is an order."

"I say you're wrong," Carl shouted. "I'll go over your head—see your superiors—you just can't decide my life away like that!"

Prisbi was standing now too, a twisted grimace splitting his face in a caricature of a smile. He roared at Carl.

"You can't go over my head or appeal to anyone else—I have the last word! You hear that? *I tell you what to do.* I say you work—and you're going to work. You doubt that? You doubt what I can do?" There was a bubble of froth on his pale lips now. "I say you have shouted at me and used insulting language and threatened me, and the record will bear me out!"

Prisbi fumbled on his desk until he found a microphone. He raised it, trembling, to his mouth and pressed the button.

"This is Sentence Advisor Prisbi. For actions unbecoming a sentenced man when addressing a Sentence Advisor, I recommend Carl Tritt's sentence be increased by one week."

The answer was instantaneous. The Sentence Control speaker on the wall spoke in its usual voder tones. "Sentence approved. Carl Tritt, seven days have been added to your sentence, bringing it to a total of sixteen years . . ."

The words droned on, but Carl wasn't listening. He was staring down a red tunnel of hatred. The only thing he was aware of in the entire world was the pasty white face of Advisor Prisbi.

"You . . . didn't have to do that," he finally choked out. "You don't have to make it worse for me when you're supposed to be helping me." Sudden realization came to Carl. "But you don't want to help me, do you? You enjoy playing God with sentenced men, twisting their lives in your hands—"

His voice was drowned out by Prisbi's, shouting into the microphone again . . . *deliberate insults . . . recommend a month be added to Carl Tritt's sentence. . . .* Carl heard what the other man was saying. But he didn't care any more. He had tried hard to do it their way. He couldn't do it any longer. He hated the system, the men who designed it, the machines that enforced it. And most of all he hated the man before him, who was a summation of the whole rotten mess. At the end, for all his efforts, he had ended up in the hands of this pulpy sadist. It wasn't going to be that way at all.

"Take your glasses off," he said in a low voice.

"What's that . . . what?" Prisbi said. He had finished shouting into the microphone and was breathing heavily.

"Don't bother," Carl said reaching slowly across the table. "I'll do it for you." He pulled the man's glasses off and laid them gently on

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the table. Only then did Prisbi realize what was happening. *No* was all he could say, in a sudden outrush of breath.

Carl's fist landed square on those hated lips, broke them, broke the teeth behind them and knocked the man back over his chair onto the floor. The tender new skin on Carl's hand was torn and blood dripped down his fingers. He wasn't aware of it. He stood over the huddled, whimpering shape on the floor and laughed. Then he stumbled out of the office, shaken with laughter.

The robot-receptionist turned a coldly disapproving, glass and steel, face on him and said something. Still laughing he wrenched a heavy light stand from the floor and battered the shining face in. Clutching the lamp he went out into the hall.

Part of him screamed in terror at the enormity of what he had done, but just part of his mind. And this small voice was washed away by the hot wave of pleasure that surged through him. He was breaking the rules—*all* of the rules—this time. Breaking out of the cage that had trapped him all of his life.

As he rode down in the automatic elevator the laughter finally died away, and he wiped the dripping sweat from his face. A small voice scratched in his ear.

"Carl Tritt, you have committed violation of sentence and your sentence is hereby increased by . . ."

"Where are you!" he bellowed. "Don't hide there and whine in my ear. Come out!" He peered closely at the wall of the car until he found the glass lens.

"You see me, do you?" he shouted at the lens. "Well I see you too!" The lamp stand came down and crashed into the glass. Another blow tore through the thin metal and found the speaker. It expired with a squawk.

People ran from him in the street, but he didn't notice them. They were just victims the way he had been. It was the enemy he wanted to crush. Every video eye he saw caught a blow from the battered stand. He poked and tore until he silenced every speaker he passed. A score of battered and silent robots marked his passage.

It was inevitable that he should be caught. He neither thought about that or cared very much. *This* was the moment he had been living for all his life. There was no battle song he could sing, he didn't know any. But there was one mildly smutty song he remembered from his school days. It would have to do. Roaring it at the top of his voice, Carl left a trail of destruction through the shining perfection of the city.

The speakers never stopped talking to Carl, and he silenced them as fast as he found them. His sentence mounted higher and higher with each act.

". . . making a total of two hundred and twelve years, nineteen

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days and . . ." The voice was suddenly cut off as some control circuit finally realized the impossibility of its statements. Carl was riding a moving ramp towards a freight level. He crouched, waiting for the voice to start again so he could seek it out and destroy it. A speaker rustled and he looked around for it.

"Carl Tritt, your sentence has exceeded the expected bounds of your life and is therefore meaningless . . ."

"Always was meaningless," he shouted back. "I know that now. Now where are you? I'm going to get you!" The machine droned on steadily.

". . . in such a case you are remanded for trial. Peace officers are now in their way to bring you in. You are ordered to go peacefully or . . . GLILRK . . ." The lamp stand smashed into the speaker.

"Send them," Carl spat into the mass of tangled metal and wire. "I'll take care of them too."

The end was preordained. Followed by the ubiquitous eyes of Central, Carl could not run forever. The squad of officers cornered him on a lower level and closed in. Two of them were clubbed unconscious before they managed to get a knockout needle into his flesh.

The same courtroom and the same judge. Only this time there were two muscular human guards present to watch Carl. He didn't seem to need watching, slumped forward as he was against the bar of justice. White bandages covered the cuts and bruises.

A sudden humming came from the robot judge as he stirred to life. "Order in the court," he said, rapping the gavel once and returning it to its stand. "Carl Tritt, this court finds you guilty . . ."

"What, again? Aren't you tired of that sort of thing yet?" Carl asked.

"Silence while sentence is being passed," the judge said loudly and banged down again with the gavel. "You are guilty of crimes too numerous to be expiated by sentencing. Therefore you are condemned to Personality Death. Psycho-surgery shall remove all traces of this personality from your body, until this personality is dead, dead, dead."

"Not that," Carl whimpered, leaning forward and stretching his arms out pleadingly towards the judge. "Anything but that."

Before either guard could act, Carl's whimper turned to a loud laugh as he swept the judge's gavel off the bench. Turning with it, he attacked the astonished guards. One dropped instantly as the gavel caught him behind the ear. The other struggled to get his gun out —then fell across the first man's limp body.

"Now judge," Carl shouted with happiness, "*I* have the gavel, let's see what *I* do!" He swept around the end of the bench and hammer-

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ed the judge's sleek metal head into a twisted ruin. The judge, merely an extension of the machinery of Central Control, made no attempt to defend itself.

There was the sound of running feet in the hall and someone pulled at the door. Carl had no plan. All he wanted to do was remain free and do as much damage as long as the fire of rebellion burned inside of him. There was only the single door into the courtroom. Carl glanced quickly around and his technician's eye noticed the access plate set in the wall behind the judge. He twisted the latch and kicked it open.

A video tube was watching him from a high corner of the courtroom, but that couldn't be helped. The machine could follow him wherever he went anyway. All he could do was try and stay ahead of the pursuit. He pulled himself through the access door as two robots burst into the courtroom.

"Carl Tritt, surrender at once. A further change has been . . . has been . . . Carl . . . carl . . . ca . . ."

Listening to their voices through the thin metal door, Carl wondered what had happened. He hazarded a look. Both robots had ground to a halt and were making aimless motions. Their speakers rustled, but said nothing. After a few moments the random movements stopped. They turned at the same time, picked up the unconscious peace officers, and went out. The door closed behind them. Carl found it very puzzling. He watched for some minutes longer, until the door opened again. This time it was a tool-hung repair robot that trundled in. It moved over to the ruined judge and began dismantling it.

Closing the door quietly, Carl leaned against its cool metal and tried to understand what had happened. With the threat of immediate pursuit removed, he had time to think.

Why hadn't he been followed? Why had Central Control acted as if it didn't know his whereabouts? This omnipotent machine had scanning tubes in every square inch of the city, he had found that out. And it was hooked into the machines of the other cities of the world. There was no place it couldn't see. Or rather one place.

The thought hit him so suddenly he gasped. Then he looked around him. A tunnel of relays and controls stretched away from him, dimly lit by glow plates. It could be—yes it could be. *It had to be.*

There could be only one place in the entire world that Central Control could not look—inside its own central mechanism. Its memory and operating circuits. No machine with independent decision could repair its own thinking circuits. This would allow destructive negative feedback to be built up. An impaired circuit could only impair itself more, it couldn't possibly repair itself.

He was inside the brain circuits

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of Central Control. So as far as that city-embracing machine knew he had ceased to be. He existed nowhere the machine could see. The machine could see everywhere. Therefore he didn't exist. By this time all memory of him had been probably erased.

Slowly at first, then faster and faster, he walked down the corridor.

"Free!" he shouted. "Really free—for the first time in my life. Free to do as I want, to watch the whole world and laugh at them!" A power and happiness flowed through him. He opened door after door, exulting in his new kingdom.

He was talking aloud, bubbling with happiness. "I can have the repair robots that work on the circuits bring me food. Furniture, clothes—whatever I want. I can live here just as I please—do what I please." The thought was wildly exciting. He threw open another door and stopped, rigid.

The room before him was tastefully furnished, just as he would have done it. Books, paintings on the walls, soft music coming from a hidden record player. Carl gaped at it. Until the voice spoke behind him.

"Of course it would be wonderful to live here," the voice said. "To be master of the city, have anything you want at your fingertips. But what makes you think, poor little man, that you are the *first* one to realize that? And to come here. And there is really only room for one you know."

Carl turned slowly, very slowly.

Measuring the distance between himself and the other man who stood behind him in the doorway.

Weighing the chances of lashing out with the gavel he still clutched, before the other man could fire the gun he held in his hand.

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Isaac Asimov's RAIN, RAIN, GO AWAY!

John Brunner's THE ROUND TRIP

Marla Baxter's LIFE FORM FROM OUTER SPACE

Evelyn E. Smith's THE ALTERNATE HOST

and

L. Sprague de Camp and Fletcher Pratt's

BELL, BOOK AND CANDLE

—in FANTASTIC UNIVERSE

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prison break

by . . . Miriam Allen de Ford

There was no time to plan. Help might come in time—and might not. Meanwhile, they were six against a mob.

WARDEN MILES MORGAN looked at the five men he had summoned to his office. He could trust them all. They might well all die, and he with them, but while they lived no prisoner would escape.

Being a prison warden in the United States of America in 2033 was in one way a sinecure and in another way a responsibility almost too great for one fallible man. The Bates-Watson Law, passed in 2014 and finally declared constitutional by the Supreme Court in 2017—the court had ruled, 7 to 2, that it did not involve cruel and unusual punishment—had largely emptied the prisons, so far as new inmates were concerned. (The old ones were kept in special institutions until their terms expired.) For one thing, juries were reluctant to convict except on unimpeachable evidence; for another, the abandonment at last of the outmoded McNaghten Rule, and the requirement of unbiased psychiatric examination of each indicted person, had shifted from prisons to mental hospitals the huge number of borderline psychotics and psychopaths who once had made up the majority of the prison popula-

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tion; for still another, the new form of sentence acted as a genuine deterrent, as capital punishment never had done. A man hesitated a long time before committing a felony, when the chances were, not that he would serve five or ten years in a modern, enlightened prison and then come out to the world he had known, but that when his sentence was served (and parole was no longer possible) he would emerge as a stranger, with all his contemporaries physically five or ten years his seniors.

The Lingelbach-Yamasuto discovery of induced coma had made the Bates-Watson Law possible. Certain crucial neurons of the brain, the Swiss and Japanese scientists working together had proved, could be deactivated so long as the subject was kept at a temperature just above freezing-point. It was not entirely a new idea—as long ago as 1958 a science fiction writer named Clarke, in one of the startling extrapolations which so many science fiction authors of that time displayed, had suggested some such possibility, and even its application to penology. What was new was the means of achieving it, without permanent injury, and of ending it whenever the subject's term was up.

In consequence, one institution sufficed for each state—in fact, in some of the less crowded states, two or three used a common center. The former Federal penitentiaries, now that state and Federal penal institutes were one, were sometimes utilized. No provision need be made any more for feeding, clothing, employing, educating, entertaining, or disciplining mobile prisoners; the staffs consisted entirely of technicians and attendants and one building which might have housed 1000 convicts could now easily accommodate several times that number, since they lay in long rows, aisle upon aisle, with the minimum nourishment given them by injection and their cleansing and massage (to avoid bedsores and stiffened limbs) easily handled by a few orderlies.

So when Miles Morgan became warden of San Quentin in 2028, he became the chief in command of all convicted felons in California. He was a big, rawboned man, young-looking still in 2033 at 52, with a steel-trap mind sharpened by years of intensive education and practical experience. For five years his charge had gone as smoothly as clockwork; he was an excellent administrator, and had no other duties in the ordinary course of things. What he was paid his large salary for—the reason he had been the unanimous choice of the Board of Prison Commissioners and the governor, the reason they had refused his proffered resignation at the end of his first year, was that in the face of an emergency he could be depended on to cope. A widower, his whole life was in the prison. He seldom left it, and he had closed the warden's residence after his wife's death and lived in a small bachelor apartment in the main building it-

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self—a suite of rooms directly connecting with his large office.

He was there as usual on the morning of March 18, 2033, dictating to his civilian secretary, a good-looking thirtyish blonde named Mavis Brock, who had, however, been selected for her job not for her good looks but for her competence. Morgan's marriage had been a singularly happy one, and when it had ended with his wife's sudden death he had shut his emotions into a private cell that not even his few close friends ever dared to penetrate. He was far from cold, he was amiable and sociable, but something had broken in him when Laura died, and it had never been mended.

"Take a letter to Brown and Stacey," he was saying now to Miss Brock. "What has happened to the consignment of termite-proofing solution ordered by this office on February 10? We are in need of this material and must have it by the end of this week at the latest. If—"

At which instant all the paper slid off his desk, he and the secretary were both thrown to the floor in a tangled heap, and the entire stone building swayed sickeningly for many seconds and then came to a quivering stop.

An earthquake, of 6.2 intensity on the Richter scale, had opened up again the old San Andreas fault that runs from Point Arena to the Mojave.

The warden picked himself and Miss Brock up. It was characteristic of him that his first thought was for her, his second for the prison, and that, outside of a cursory examination to be sure he had no injuries, he gave none at all to himself.

"Better get home right away, Miss Brock, if you can," he said. "You'll be safer in your car than in a building, and your family will be worried about you."

"But can't I be of any help?" she asked. She commuted from near-by San Rafael.

"Not a bit; I'll take care of things here. Off you go. Watch out for fallen wires. Phone me how you find things at home."

He turned to the visiphone, to find out about damage. Before he could lift the receiver, Harry Monghetti, the head engineer, burst into the office without knocking. His face was white.

"You O. K., warden? Good. Look—something's happened."

"Bad damage?"

"Not to the building. But the shock broke the main freezer pipe."

"The emergency feeder working?"

"I checked right away. It will handle everything—except Ward H."

Ward H. They both knew what that meant. The long-termers, 20 to 50 years (nobody got life any more). The toughest and worst. And No. 30718, who had been there four years and had 46 still to go.

The warden snapped into action.

"Get the ward blocked off at once," he ordered. "The unfreezing

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doesn't take long. There are 82 men in that ward, and I want them kept there till we can secure enough force to subdue and refreeze them."

He turned to the phone as Monghetti ran from the room, and got the chief orderly at once.

"Larson? Have your men check all wards except H immediately. Tell Mrs. Carpentier to see to it that the women's ward is sealed off. Then come here for further orders."

The intercom was working all right. Now for the outside lines.

He reviewed the situation briefly. Staff. He had 63 men and women in all. None of them was a rough or a plugugly—those days were over in prison. All the tough subjects were on cots in neuron-freeze—or, in Ward H, coming out of it. Arms? Nothing, so far as he knew, but one cool-gun reposing in his own desk drawer. Blocking off Ward H wouldn't protect them very long. One of the 82 was a man named Farmer, a peterman who in a long and nefarious career, before he was caught at last, had built up a formidable reputation for opening, with the crudest instruments if necessary (say a wire off a cot-spring) any lock that the ingenuity of man had ever devised. Morgan must get effective help at once.

The State Police were going to be plenty busy handling the consequences of a major earthquake shock. He would have to have top priority to get any help out of them. He dialed the number of the governor's private line in Sacramento.

It rang twice before the first after-shock came. That wasn't so intense as the first one had been—things rocked and waved, but nothing fell, and Morgan stayed in his chair by hooking a foot around one of its legs.

But it was enough. The visiphone went dead.

Rapidly the warden went over in his mind the available help. Monghetti, Larson, a big orderly named Groutschmidt who used to be a welterweight prizefighter, another named Smith who knew judo, a technician named Salisbury whose hobby was plane-racing. The rest were indoor, studious types, useless, or worse, in this crisis. They could be of most service by getting out and spreading the word. Mrs. Carpentier and her three assistants must go immediately. As soon as they left, and the rest of the surplus staff members, the juice must be turned on in the outside gates and walls.

There just wasn't time for further detailed planning, Morgan thought as he lifted the receiver and ordered the chosen five to come to his office, and had the loudspeaker activated to get the rest of the staff out. This was the emergency that justified the sinecure. Outside aid might or might not arrive in time. Meanwhile, it was going to be six of them against 82. And he knew who the leader of the 82 would be, as soon as the men were unfrozen and had marshaled their forces: 30718. The warden shut his mind hard on that thought.

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The five dependables came running. "Ward H blocked off," Monghetti reported. Everything else had been attended to, without argument. In the sense in which a ship with a good captain is a happy ship, San Quentin was a happy prison. His staff respected him and trusted him. More, they liked him: proof of that was that every one of them knew his tragedy and not one word of it ever passed their lips.

"I don't have to draw a picture for you," he told them when they had all assembled in his big office. "How long do you figure it will take, Harry," he asked Monghetti, "before they'll be outside the ward?"

"I'd say we have from 20 minutes to half an hour."

"Good. That gives us a breathing-space. Now let's put ourselves in their minds. The unfreezing will be quick and automatic—quite unlike the freezing process. They'll be a little weak for a few minutes, but not long—we've kept them in fine condition. Farmer will get them out of there in short order.

"Their first idea, of course, will be escape. We'll see them from the windows here—lucky for us they're shatterproof and one-way transparent. They'll find out that the walls and gates have been activated. Then what will they do?"

"They know the activation cut-off is here—or they'll guess it when they can't find it anywhere else. So they'll mass and attack us," Larson said.

"Wait a minute," Salisbury interposed. "Mayn't they try first to unfreeze the fellows in the other wards?"

"Not out of sympathy, that's for sure," said the warden. "And there's enough of them already—they won't need auxiliaries. Anyway, if they had any such notion, it wouldn't hold them up long; they'd discover very soon that they didn't know how. There are no technicians among them."

"Farmer could get them into the women's ward," Larson suggested.

"He could. But they won't waste their time that way, either. They'll want out, where there are plenty of women who aren't frozen zombies." Morgan drew a long breath. "They've got a brain among them, you know," he added quietly. "He'll think of things like that."

"Yeah—30718," Smith muttered. Nobody else said anything.

"So," the warden went on briskly, "in, say, half to three quarters of an hour this office is going to be turned into a fortress. Some of you may wonder why we don't just go up to Ward H and subdue them before they get going. Because we couldn't, that's why. They'd be on us and overpower us before we'd get well started, and we can't refreeze them anyway, with the pipe broken.

"We can't communicate with the outside, the quake fixed that; but there are 57 of our staff members—58 counting Miss Brock, if she got home safely—who are out already,

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and most of them realize the general situation. They'll see to their homes and families first, of course; that's to be expected. But then, barring another big temblor, they'll begin to pick up the threads. If the damage in this area hasn't been a lot worse than it was right here, and if all we get now is lessening after-shocks, it won't be very long before people are alerted. We'll get state police, police and firemen from San Rafael and the other Marin County towns, maybe even state guardsmen, or federal troops from Hamilton Field or all the way from San Francisco. Hell, maybe just civilians with a sense of civic duty. They'll lift the siege for us. If we see them coming we can deactivate the gates."

"That's a lot of ifs," Groutschmidt growled. "It may take hours. Or days."

"Exactly," replied the warden calmly. "So it's up to us, till help comes, to hold the fort. We may all be killed. But until we are, nobody can reach the atomic activator that controls the walls and gates. We're the last redoubt. It's too late to let any of you out now, but if anybody would rather, there's time yet to lock himself in somewhere else where it might be safer."

"Nobody's going," said Larson.

"I didn't mean—" Groutschmidt's face was red.

"I know you didn't, Bill. Now let's plan tactics, as best we can. Any weapons, anybody?"

"I've got a pocketknife," said Monghetti shamefacedly. "I know it's against the rules to carry one, but when the shock came I was sharpening a pencil, and I forgot to lay it down."

"Forgiven, Harry," the warden smiled. "I've got a cool-gun—and a license for it. But I have only six cartridges. And I'm not the world's best shot. What's that you're holding, Smith?"

"Just a floor-hose nozzle, sir. I'm like Mr. Monghetti—I was just connecting the hose to wash down the floor of Ward E when the quake struck, and I carried it along without thinking."

"It will make a good blackjack."

"Not for me," said Smith complacently. "Here, Mr. Larson, you take it. I'd rather depend on judo."

The warden looked around him. The chairs, at least, were part metal, and heavy.

"The important thing is not to let them get into the office at all, if we can help it. There are 82 of them, and only six of us. At close quarters, enough of them crowding in here could simply overwhelm us. Here's the strategy. I doubt if they'll bother to break the door down, though of course they could, by sheer force of numbers; they'll get Farmer to open it for them. So it will be us in here, picking them off in the doorway, one by one."

"Like the pass at Thermopylae," said Salisbury. Nobody else but the warden recognized the allusion. He thought it an unfortunate one, considering that Leonidas and all his soldiers were slain.

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He reached into a desk drawer, and drew out a little box.

"This is going to be the worst part, in a way," he said. "Waiting for things to start. Here, each of you take one of these."

"What are they?" Larson asked.

"Tranquipills. They won't affect you except to quiet jumpy nerves. The doctor gave them to me when I—" He saw them exchange glances.

Larson and Groutschmidt shook their heads; everyone else took one. Morgan hesitated a moment, then closed the box and put it away. He felt perfectly steady.

"If we only had a paralymist outfit, or even old-fashioned tear-gas," Monghetti complained.

"Well, we haven't. That sort of thing went out with the old penal system. We're back to first principles now, man against man—six men against 82. I guess," he achieved a smile, "they forgot, when they passed the Bates-Watson Law, that California is an earthquake state. This is one contingency they didn't provide for."

He meditated for a moment. Which was better—to keep on talking, let off steam, or to let them use these last moments in silent strengthening of the spirit? Would that give them a chance to worry about their wives and children, make them jittery and shaky? He looked them over; they were a fine reliable lot.

"Let's not talk about it any more now," he said quietly. "Let's just get ourselves in position for the first assault. Groutschmidt, you and Salisbury are the strongest physically. What do you think about using these heavy chairs as battering-rams?"

"Could do," Salisbury said. Groutschmidt nodded.

"Then you two make up the first rank, right inside the doorway, with the chairs in front of you ready to grab. Smith, you stand right behind them, prepared to throw out anybody who gets past them. Harry and Ole Larson and I have the weapons, so we'll make up the backstop." He checked the gun and laid it on the edge of the desk, where he could reach it easily.

Then the wait began. Groutschmidt flexed his muscles. Salisbury, with a grin, sat down in his chair to rest, set to spring to his feet the instant there was a sound outside. Monghetti prayed. Smith took a picture from his wallet, looked at it a long time, and put it back. Larson turned and stared through the window, waiting stolidly for the first sign of life out in the yard.

And Miles Morgan had time to think.

He thought—when did he not?—about Laura, about their years together, about the anguish and shock of her death. He thought about his agreement four years ago to stay on in the work which had been all his life besides her. He thought about the understanding and sympathy of his staff here, all of whom knew all

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about his troubles. He thought about what must be happening right now in Ward H—unless they were already out of it. And he thought about that brilliant natural leader, that young, strong promising human being—that ineradicable, congenital, incurable criminal, whom a whole corps of psychiatrists had declared entirely sane, simply a throwback to the days of condottieri, corsairs, privateers—No. 30718.

He was 21 when he committed his final crime and when he began serving 50 years in San Quentin. In the ordinary way of things, the warden thought, he himself would have been long dead when 30718 came out, still apparently a young man, to a world of aged contemporaries—who would doubtless have to recommit him soon.

He never belonged to a gang or had any associate in his plunderings, though in his noncriminal life he was always foremost in every group. He simply took it for granted that everything he wanted belonged to him, and if anyone stood in his way he disposed of him. He had never had any conception of mine and thine—from childhood he stole as easily as he breathed. He would never have thought of being a pickpocket or a shoplifter or a sneak-thief—he simply took what he wanted when he wanted it, openly and directly. He burgled occupied houses and held up pedestrians and drove away in parked cars, and his speed and audacity and air of authority saved him from apprehension until the end. He was not greedy—embezzlement or forgery would have been distasteful to him, and he would not have known what to do with large sums of stolen money.

He would have made a wonderful Viking chieftain or leader of a Vandal horde or conquistador. Unfortunately he had been born into a world of peace, law, and order, all of which were completely alien to him. He was a pure atavistic mutation.

So natural was it to him to live and act as he did, that when by sheer accident his mother discovered, lying on his bureau where he had thrown it carelessly, a strangely set ring that she remembered described as part of the loot of a bold daytime burglary, and—a gentle but intrepid woman—accused him point blank, he calmly acknowledged his guilt.

"That's the way I am, mother," he said. "What are you going to do about it?"

He was then a senior in college, with an outstanding scholastic record. His home life could not have been better. He came of gentle, cultured people with high ideals, who loved him dearly.

His slight, shy mother faced him with agony in her eyes, but no fear.

"There is only one thing I can do, son," she said softly. "I shall have to tell your father, and he will have to turn you in to the police."

All this came out at his trial, on the testimony of a curious servant who was crouched at the keyhole,

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and who a minute later burst into the room, too late.

For the boy did not even become enraged. He smiled.

"Too bad, mother," he murmured. And sprang.

Before the screaming servant could reach them, his strong hands had twisted his mother's neck and broken it, as a butcher wrings the neck of a chicken. She had been a pretty woman. She was not pretty now.

The servant's screams brought immediate help, or she would have been next. A grocer's boy happened to be delivering an order at the back door, the next-door neighbor was gardening near the open window, a passing woman heard and used her wits, broke open the nearest police box, and summoned down a prowlcopter. Among them, the boy was seized before he could escape from the house.

Eight months later, after a long trial and many appeals, he became 30718.

And there was not the slightest doubt that, any minute now, he would lead the attack on the warden's office that had become a beleaguered fort.

Larson turned.

"Here they come," he announced.

"Watch till they get to the gate," the warden directed. "As soon as they find they can't get through and start back toward the building, take your positions and get ready. Is 30718 leading them?"

"It's hard to tell. Wait—oh, yes, I see him. He's standing over at the right; he's got them set up in regular military file. He's talking to one of them—it's Farmer, 29847. Farmer's supposed to get the gate open, I guess. He'd better not get too close—oops, he's found out. He's running back. Now they're talking again.

"Get set, warden. Conference over. They're wheeling, just like army drill. Here they come back. 30718 isn't at the head—oh, oh, he's marching in last. Real strategy there—shock troops first, I imagine."

"The guy ought to've been a general," Salisbury growled. He was the most recently employed of the staff members in the room, and knew least about the inmates.

"He ought indeed," murmured Morgan. "Well, here it comes. Watch for the instant the door begins to open, everybody."

But 30718 still had a surprise for them. They heard the tramp of feet in the hall outside. But there was no sound of tampering with the lock. Instead, a voice called through the door. Miles Morgan knew that voice; he had heard it last at the trial. Harry Monghetti knew it too; he had heard it when he stood by, waiting to turn on the freezer when the surgeon had deactivated the selected neurons in 30718's brain.

"We're coming in," said the voice, "and whoever's in there will be killed. We're giving you one chance. Turn the juice off the walls

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and gates so we can get away, and we'll go."

"You're not leaving here," Miles Morgan called back firmly. He felt an absurd impulse to add, "That's one more chance than you gave your own mother."

"O.K., if that's the way you want it. Do your work, Farmer."

It took Farmer eleven seconds by the warden's watch. The doorway at least was too narrow to be rushed by more than two men at a time.

They stood four abreast at first. There was no time for the defenders to notice who was who, but the big bruisers were in the van, the strongarm men, the muggers, the dangerous young who had murdered for thrills.

Obviously they had not expected any resistance. This will be a walkover, 30718 must have told them; these guys won't fight. Perhaps he had expected the warden to be alone in his office to meet them all.

Salisbury and Groutschmidt swung the heavy chairs methodically, and for every swing a man went down. The defenders had one advantage—they were not freshly out of years of coma. The attackers' tactics changed. At a word from their commander they broke ranks and charged as a mob. Another aftershock made the walls tremble, but in the excitement of the melee it went unnoticed by either side.

Salisbury went down suddenly under a burly giant, who seized the chair and threw it straight at Larson. The heavy metal frame caught the chief orderly square on the forehead. Larson fell flat on his face and did not move again. Smith, crouching, seized the first comer by his ankles and threw him back at his companions. He got two more the same way, and then, before he could tackle the next, a fist caught him in the mouth and a knee in the solar plexus. He collapsed, moaning. Groutschmidt continued to swing like an automaton. Monghetti retrieved the chair and darted to Salisbury's place, but he was no equal to Groutschmidt. At a word from the invisible leader, half a dozen hands reached out for him and dragged him bodily through the doorway. He was passed overhead to the attackers' rear, and then the men in the room could no longer see him. They heard him scream once above the yells and panting.

Morgan sighted his gun carefully, aiming it away from Groutschmidt, now the sole defender at the door. He had only six cartridges. Larson had never even had a chance to use the hose-nozzle. Monghetti's pocketknife had gone with him. The warden tried to estimate how many of the prisoners were left, but he gave it up. If any had been killed it would be by a fluke, and the injured would be getting themselves together and coming back to the fray. He shot without picking a target.

It hit somebody. There was a gurgling shriek, followed by a moment of surprised silence. Then the voice in back said coolly: "That's the warden—he's the only one who

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could have a gun. Go in and take him."

Smith began to come to his senses, but he couldn't stand. Monghetti was gone. Salisbury might be dead; Larson certainly was.

Morgan fired again, twice. There was no response; he had missed, both times.

Groutschmidt was beginning to give out. He had broken the chair by this time, and was wielding the heavy frame like a club. He brought it down on a head in the doorway, and the head disappeared. But an arm snaked past, and something flashed. The ex-prizefighter gasped and choked; a spout of blood splashed from his neck. Somebody had found Monghetti's knife.

Smith, crawling painfully across the floor, found Larson's hose-nozzle. Groutschmidt's body was blocking the doorway. Smith reared himself up on it and struck. A leg was broken somewhere, from the crack and the screech. With his last strength Smith threw the nozzle back where it could not be seized, and they trampled him under.

There were three bullets left.

Salisbury opened his eyes. "My back's broken, warden," he croaked. "I can't move. For God's sake don't let them get me."

Morgan's eyes fell on the technician, lying grotesquely misshapen like an eviscerated rag-doll. He nodded. "God bless you," whispered Salisbury as he died.

Now there were two bullets.

He had thought they would pour in at once. But the strategist at the rear was wasting no more of his men than necessary. Morgan could hear his commands. "Clear ranks," he ordered. "Drag all the casualties out of the way. You in front there, pull out those two who are blocking the door. Right. Now go in and get him."

Miles Morgan stood very still in front of his desk. His voice rang out through the doorway.

"I shall shoot dead the first man in," he said. "Who wants to be first?"

There was a vague stir. Storming the office was one thing. Sure death was another.

"Don't let him bluff you," sneered the voice in back.

"They know I'm not bluffing," said the warden. "You—30718."

"Yes?"

"You've got brains; why don't you use them? You know I won't deactivate the walls for you. You've killed five of my men; I don't know how many of yours we've got. Any minute now, reinforcements will be coming from outside. You can kill me, but that won't tell you where the atomic cut-off is or how to use it. By the time anyone could get in here without me, your wounded will have died of their injuries."

He raised his voice so none of them could miss one word.

"Some of you long-term men are mighty near the end of your sentences. You've made yourselves liable to new sentences of 50 years more. In other words, you'll all

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stay frozen till you die of old age.

"Every one of you knows I keep my promises. I give you my word I'll see to it that any of you who go quietly back to Ward H now and stay there will not be punished for this break.

"I shall give you just two minutes to turn and leave. Then, as I said, I shall shoot dead the first man in."

Morgan could hear his own heart beating. For a second there was no other sound at all. Then there was a shuffle, followed by a blow. "Don't be such fools," snarled 30718. "He's only stalling for time."

Just one, Morgan prayed silently, just one to lead the stampede!

He never knew which one it was.

When it had been quiet for a long time, except for the groans of somebody dying in pain back there in the hall, he went to the door and looked out, his gun steady in his hand. He knew there would be one left who was not a casualty. There was.

"Come here," he said. "You never were a coward, were you?"

"No, I never was," said 30718. He walked forward and faced the gun.

"You know that I have to do this," said the warden. The prisoner smiled.

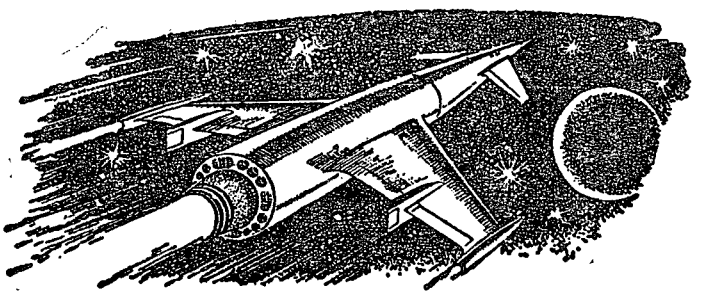
"Sure," he said. "Law and order. They'd have stayed where they were, scared to death, if I hadn't egged them on. Well, we got some of you, didn't we? We'd have got you too if they'd only had my guts.

"Come on, get it over with. I guess that prosecutor at my trial was right when he said I was born in the wrong place at the wrong time. I'm what I am, and this isn't a world a man like me could live in and be himself. Shoot."

"Is that your last word?" asked the warden. "Aren't you sorry for anything?"

"Sorry? No—why should I be? If anybody stands in my way, I get rid of him if I can. I'm not a sentimentalist, like the rest of you. If I could grab that gun, I would. I can't. So let's finish it up."

Miles Morgan looked into the eyes of his son, and shot.



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forbidden planet

by . . . Bertram Chandler

There was a reason why they called this proscribed planet Eblis. Going there was like coming very close to hell . . .

SHE was a large hunk of ship, was *Sally Ann,* too large and too imposing for the name she bore. She stood proudly in her berth at Port Forlorn, dwarfing cranes and gantries and administration buildings, towering high above *Rimstar* and *Rimhound,* both typical units of the Rim Runners' fleet. Yet, to the trained eye of a spaceman, a relationship between *Sally Ann* and the smaller vessels would have been obvious—all three bore the unmistakable stamp of the Interstellar Transport Commission and all three had come down in the Universe. *Sally Ann,* for all her outward smartness, had come down the furthest; she had been a *Beta* Class liner, and now she was tramping. *Rimstar* and *Rimhound* had been *Epsilon* Class tramps and now they were dignified with the name of cargo liners.

Commodore Grimes, Astronautical Superintendent for Rim Runners, looked out from the window of his office towards the big ship, screwing up his eyes against the steely glare of the westering sun. His hard, pitted face softened momentarily as he said, "I'm sorry, Captain. We can't use her. She just

We've all talked about the sobriety of outlook of British SF writers and their "pessimistic" approach to the world of Tomorrow—natural, perhaps, to a people living so much closer to reality than we do. Here, in Chandler's latest story, is proof, though, that this is an unwise generalization.

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won't fit into any of our trades."

"Fletcher, your Agent on Van Diemen's Planet, assured me that I should be sure of getting a charter as soon as I got out here," said Captain Clavering. "I've delivered the load of migrants that you were clamoring for; now it's up to you to at least give me profitable employment back to the Centre."

"You had nothing in writing," stated Grimes. "You took Fletcher's word for it. I know Fletcher—he used to be a Purser in your old concern, Trans-Galactic Clippers. He's got that typical big ship Purser's knack of seeming to promise everything whilst, in reality, promising nothing." He got to his feet and pointed towards *Rimstar*. "There's the sort of ship that you and your friends should have bought when you won that lottery. A tramp can always make a living of sorts out on the Rim—one of our captains came into a large sum of salvage money and bought a tramp; he's running the Eastern Circuit on time charter to us . . ."

"I heard about him," admitted Clavering. "He pulled *Thermopylae* off Eblis. I was in her for a while after she got back to her normal running . . . But, Commodore, what Calver's doing has nothing to do with *my* problems. Surely there must be some passenger traffic on the Rim. Fletcher told me . . ."

"Fletcher would tell you anything," snapped Grimes. "If you've seen one Rim World you've seen them all. Why should anybody want to proceed from Lorn to Faraway, or from Ultimo to Thule? The handful of people who must travel for business reasons we can carry in our own ships—they're all fitted with accommodation for twelve passengers, and it's rarely used.

"In any case—why this desire on your part to run the Rim? We have a saying, you know—a man who comes out to the Rim to make his living would go to Hell for a pastime."

"Because," said Clavering bitterly, "I thought it was the only part of the Galaxy where a tramp passenger ship could make a living. It seems that I was mistaken."

Grimes got to his feet, held out his hand to the younger man in a gesture of dismissal. He said, "I'm sorry, Captain, and I mean it. I hate to see a good spaceman with a large white elephant hanging around his neck. If I hear of any profitable employment at all, I'll let you know—but I can't hold out much hope."

"Thank you," said Clavering.

He shook hands with Grimes and strode out of the office, walked with a briskness that masked his reluctance to face his shipmates, his fellow shareholders, across the windswept, dusty apron to his ship.

They were waiting for him in *Sally Ann*'s shabby, but still comfortable, lounge. There was Sally Ann Clavering who, in addition to being his wife, combined the func-

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tions of Purser and Catering Officer. There was Taubman, Chief and only Reaction Drive Engineer, and Rokovsky, who was in charge of the Interstellar Drive. There was Larwood, Chief Officer, and Mary Larwood, the Bio-Chemist. The few remaining officers were not shareholders and were not present.

Clavering maintained his stiffness as he entered the lounge, by his bearing counteracting the shabbiness of his uniform. His lean face, under the graying hair, was expressionless.

"So they have nothing for us," stated Sally Ann flatly.

"They have nothing for us," agreed Clavering tonelessly, watching disappointment momentarily soften the fine lines of his wife's face, watching it succeeded by a combination of hope—surely a hopeless hope—and determination.

"We'd have been better off," growled burly, black-bearded Rokovsky, "if we'd never won that blasted lottery. What do we do now? Sell the ship for scrap, hoping that she'll bring enough to pay our passages back to civilization? Or do we lay her up and get jobs with Rim Runners?"

"It was a gamble," said Larwood, "and it just didn't come off. But we were all in it." *And I'll gamble again,* said the expression on his dark, reckless face. *And I,* declared the mobile features of his wife.

"At least," pointed out the slight, heavily bespectacled Taubman, "we have reaction mass enough to take us up and clear of the planet, and the Pile's good for a few years yet."

"And where do we go from here?" demanded Rokovsky.

"And what do we use for money to pay the last of the bills?" asked Sally Ann.

"Buy another ticket in the Nine Worlds Lottery," suggested Larwood.

"What with?" she countered. "The prizes are big, as we know, but those tickets are expensive. And we have to get back to the Nine Worlds first, anyhow."

"Damn it all!" exploded Clavering. "We've got a ship, a good ship. We didn't show the profit that we should have done on that load of migrants, but that doesn't mean that there's no profit to be made elsewhere in the Galaxy. That Psionic Radio Operator of ours will just have to wake up his dog's brain in aspic and keep a real listening watch for a change. There must be *something* somewhere—a planet newly opened up for colonization, some world threatened by disaster and a demand for ships for the evacuation . . ."

"He says that it's time that he got paid," stated Sally Ann. "And so does Sparks."

"And the Second Mate," added Larwood. "And the Quack."

"What fittings can we sell?" asked Clavering hopelessly. "What can we do without?"

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"Nothing," replied his wife.

"We could . . ." began Clavering, then paused, listening. Faintly at first, then rising in intensity, there was the wailing, urgent note of a siren, loud enough to penetrate the shell plating and the insulation of the ship. Without a word the Captain got to his feet, strode towards the doorway of the axial shaft and the little elevator that would take him up to the control room. Wordlessly, the others followed. This, obviously, was some kind of emergency—and in an emergency the spaceman's conditioned reflexes impel him automatically towards his station.

Clavering and his officers crowded into the little elevator cage, waited impatiently as it bore them upwards to the nose of the ship. They almost ran into the control room, looked out through the big ports.

The sun was down and the sky was already dark save for the pale glow in the west. Falling slowly, winking balefully, were the red stars of the warning rockets that had been fired from the control tower. Scurrying out on to the spaceport apron like huge beetles, the beams of their headlights like questing antennae in the dusty air, were two red painted fire trucks and the ambulance. There was activity around the two Rim Runners ships, *Rimstar* and *Rimhound,* as their personnel hurried out of the airlock doors and down the ramps.

"There!" cried Larwood, pointing.

Clavering looked up, almost directly overhead, and saw a fitful glare in the sky. There was a ship there, and she was coming down; and the siren and the red rockets and the lifesaving equipment made it obvious that she was in some kind of trouble. There had been, he remembered, a ship due that evening—*Faraway Quest.*

"Switch on the transceiver," he ordered.

Larwood had anticipated the command. Suddenly there was a fresh voice in the control room—a crisp voice, calm, yet with an underlying note of anxiety.

"Impossible to pull out and clear. Numbers one and two liners gone, number three tube liner starting to melt. Will try to bring her in on the other three—if they hold that long."

Grimes' voice replied. "Do your best, Captain."

"What the hell do you think I am doing? This is my ship, Commodore, and it's the lives of my crew and passengers that are at stake. *Do your best!* What else is there to do?"

"I'm sorry, Captain," replied Grimes.

"Just keep off the air, will you?" snapped the other. "I've a job of work to do, and I can't do it if you keep nattering. Just have everything ready in case of a crash, that's all. Over and *out!*"

"Do you think he'll make it?"

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asked Larwood, of nobody in particular.

"He has to," said Clavering shortly. He has to, he thought. He'll have to fight her down every inch of the way, anticipating every yaw. The servo-mechanisms in those old *Epsilon* Class ships were never designed to cope with any real emergency . . .

He found his binoculars, adjusted the polarisation, stared up at the descending ship. He was no engineer, but even to him the irregular pulse of the exhaust looked unhealthy, as did the great gouts of flame that dropped from it, the incandescent, molten ceramic of the liners. He could make out faintly the shape of the vessel above the blinding glare of the back-blast, saw that her Captain was maintaining her in an upright position.

The noise of her passage was audible now, drowning the screaming voice of the siren, pulsating as irregularly as the siren had done. At times it was almost the full throated roar of a full powered ship, at times it died to a querulous mutter. If the rockets failed entirely she would fall. Desperately, Clavering willed them not to fail, knew that the others with him were doing the same. If will power could have sustained *Faraway Quest* it would have done—but there is a limit to the weight that even a team of trained teleporteurs can handle, and even a small ship is far in excess of that limit.

Down she dropped, lower and lower, making for the berth midway between *Sally Ann* and the nearer of the two Rim ships. Still she was under control, although beginning to yaw heavily. He'll make it, thought Clavering, he'll make it. Dimly he was aware of his wife's hand on his arm, gripping it painfully, dimly he was aware of the muttered curses of Rokovsky, the tense whispering of Larwood— "You're almost home. Stay with it, man, stay with it!" —the heavy breathing of Taubman.

With feet only to go, the last of the tubes blew, blinding the watchers. They heard the crash, heard the notes of the siren swell to fill the silence that followed immediately, heard the noise of shouting.

Slowly their vision cleared. Through streaming eyes Clavering stared out from the viewport, saw *Faraway Quest* standing there, gleaming in the beams of the searchlights. He thought at first that she had, miraculously, escaped damage—then saw that her vanes had driven deep into the concrete, that her stern was crumpled. An arc flared bluely in the vicinity of her airlock door as the rescue crew began to burn its way into the ship. Grimes' voice was barking from the speaker of the transceiver, "Captain! Captain Hall! What casualties have you?"

The voice that replied was faint and unutterably weary. "I . . . I don't know yet. No reply from the

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reaction drive room. The engineers . . ."

"I can guess," said Taubman heavily.

"We all can," said Clavering.

"It's an ill wind," said Clavering. "If anybody had been killed in *Faraway Quest* I shouldn't be feeling so happy about it, but even those in the reaction drive room escaped with only a bad shaking."

Sally Ann laid down her pen, looked up from the store sheet that she was checking. As she looked at her husband's face the frown lifted from her own. "Tell!" she ordered. "What are you so cheerful about?"

"Grimes sent for me," said Clavering.

"I know," she said. "What did he want you for?"

"I'm coming to that. *Faraway Quest* is, as you know, a converted *Epsilon* Class tramp. She is—or was—a survey ship of sorts, which means that cargo space had been modified for the accommodation of personnel. She had a full load of scientists when she crashed here—she was on her way to Eblis to carry out a proper exploration . . ."

"Eblis," said his wife. "That's the world that *Thermopylae* was almost lost on . . ."

"That's right. Anyhow, there's this expedition fitted out at great expense and no ship to carry it. *Faraway Quest* can be made spaceworthy again, but it'll not be done in five minutes. Meanwhile, here at Port Forlorn, is one large vessel, complete with ample accommodation and storage space—a large vessel, furthermore, that's just pining for a charter . . ."

"You mean that they want us?" she demanded.

"Who else?" he countered. "Meanwhile, call a general meeting of the shareholders—they're apt to sulk, Rokovsky especially, if anything is done without their being consulted."

"I," she said, "will do just that."

"Also," he told her, "you can tell the hired help that they're getting paid."

He left her to make the arrangements, went into the lounge, sat in his usual chair. Larwood came in, his wife with him. They smiled at the Captain, knowing from his expression that he had good news for them. Rokovsky, morose as always, joined them, and the only slightly less gloomy Taubman. Lastly, Sally Ann entered briskly, carrying a large folder of papers. She remained standing, said, "The Chairman of the Board of Directors will now address you." She sat down as Clavering got to his feet.

Briefly, yet omitting nothing, Clavering told them of his meeting with Grimes. He said that *Sally Ann* would be on hire for a minimum period of six months, and that during this time all expenses—wages, propellant, supplies—would be paid by Rim Runners.

"And what," asked Larwood, "about insurance? Lloyd's have a list of proscribed planets and Eblis

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is on the list. We can land—but it means ruinous premiums if we do. Or are we just hanging off in orbit and sending the scientists down in the boats?"

"We are landing," said Clavering. "Grimes assures me that there is a plateau in the northern hemisphere that's quite safe. Rim Runners are looking after our insurance in any case."

"And what sort of planet is this Eblis?" demanded Rokovsky.

"It's just what its name implies," replied Clavering. "It's in the throes of perpetual vulcanism. The atmosphere's a fine, rich mixture of carbon dioxide, sulphur dioxide and a few more noxious gases. The seas are practically undiluted acid. The electrical storms are so spectacular as to be clearly visible from over a thousand miles out in Space . . ."

"Any life?" asked Mary Larwood.

"That's one of the things the expedition hopes to find out," Clavering told her.

"We shall be risking the ship," grumbled Rokovsky.

"She'll be well covered," Clavering assured him.

"And our lives," continued the engineer.

"We're spacemen," said Larwood, "and we risk our lives every time that we lift from the surface of a planet. Come to that—we risk our lives every time that we cross a busy street."

"The Commodore," said Clavering, "wants our answer by 1300 hours today. There will be quite a deal of fitting out to be done if we accept the charter. So we'll vote on it now."

"I still don't like it," complained Rokovsky, but his hand was raised in assent with those of the others.

None of *Sally Ann's* people was sorry to get away from Lorn. It is a dismal planet, perhaps the most dismal of all the Rim Worlds. It is always cold, and the wind is always blowing, and the air is always thick with dust and chemical fumes.

They were pleased, all of them, when the passengers, the personnel of the Combined Universities Expedition to Eblis, boarded, when the ramps were drawn up and in and the airlock doors closed. They were happy as they stood by at their various stations, as the last seconds ticked away to the authorized time of departure.

Clavering and his navigating officers sat in the control room, looking out at the dismal landscape —the low, brown hills, the heaps of slag, the untidy, unlovely huddle of shabby buildings that was the city of Port Forlorn. The sun shone blearily through a haze that was the work of Industrial Man as much as the work of Nature.

Clavering watched the sweep second hand of the chronometer, waited for the last reports to come in from all departments. Satisfied, "Lift ship!" he ordered.

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"Lift ship!" repeated Larwood.

Sally Ann trembled as the rockets fired, then the great bulk of her rose as though she, like her people, was glad to be getting away and clear from Lorn. Clavering could see the dirty concrete of the spaceport diminishing fast below them, cranes and gantries and the Rim Runners tramp loading for Tharn looking like toys, the hulk of the unfortunate *Faraway Quest,* surrounded by the busy machines of the ship repair squads, looking like the body of some large insect being torn to pieces by voracious ants.

Clavering was sorry for *Faraway Quest* and for her Captain—but he was, at the same time, glad—his loyalties were to *Sally Ann,* and this charter, even though it was the direct result of another shipmaster's misfortune, could well mean her salvation.

She was clear of the atmosphere now, her rockets silent, falling free in orbit about the dun, uninviting ball that was Lorn. To one side of her was the great glowing lens of the Galaxy, to the other the black emptiness of intergalactic space. Her gyroscopes whined as she turned slowly, as Larwood lined her up for the Eblis sun. Clavering was content to watch the efficient, unhurried actions of his Chief Officer; reckless he might be in some respects, but never in his ship handling or his navigation.

"Resume acceleration, sir?" asked Larwood. "One gravity for five minutes?"

"Resume acceleration," replied Clavering.

Again the rockets roared, building up thrust and velocity. Larwood took observations and read instruments, assisted by the Second Officer, corrected *Sally Ann's* trajectory with a brief burst from a steering jet. When he was satisfied he looked at Clavering, who nodded. Larwood cut the reaction drive, ordered the Mannschenn Drive to be started. The song of the spinning, precessing flywheels filled all the spaces of the ship; abruptly the Galactic lens took on the appearance of a huge, luminous Klein flask fashioned by a demented glass blower. Clavering felt, as always, the uncanny sensation of *deja vu*— as the temporal precession fields built up, the knowledge that past, present and future were one and indivisible. He wondered, as he always did on these occasions, if he possessed in some slight degree the talent of precognition. He tried, as he always did—and invariably without success—to foresee coming events.

"On trajectory, sir," reported the Chief Officer.

"Thank you, Mr. Larwood. Set deep space watches, observe standing orders."

He unbuckled himself from his chair, pulled himself by the guide rail to the axial shaft. He wanted to see how Sally Ann was making out with the passengers and, more

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especially, with the almost untrained girls who had been engaged as stewardesses. He tried, for the last time, before his mind became accustomed to the time-twisting field of the Drive, to look into the future.

All that he could think of was what Grimes had said to him when he had been trying to arrange a charter: "A man who'd come out to the Rim to earn his living would go to Hell for a pastime."

It was a quiet trip.

The scientists kept very much to themselves and gave no trouble. There was no need for the ship's staff to organize entertainments, to keep the customers busy and, therefore, happy. The customers kept themselves busy, checking and rechecking their equipment, studying what little was known about the world to which they were bound, attending lectures given by the experts in various fields.

The only one of the party with whom Clavering had any real contact was Dr. Fosdick, the leader of the expedition. He and the Master studied such maps and charts as existed—and incomplete and vague they were—and tried to work out some sort of plan of campaign.

"This is the plateau, Captain," said Fosdick, his gnarled index finger stabbing at the paper. "Observations from Space indicate that it is free from volcanic activity and not affected by earthquakes."

"Can you see an earthquake from a thousand miles out?" asked Clavering dubiously. "Remember that a ship on the ground is a fragile and top heavy thing, and a relatively slight tremor could well cause her total destruction."

"The spring stays should take care of that," Fosdick assured him. "After all, Captain Calver, in *Lorn Lady*, rode out a hurricane on Mellise—his ship was grounded for engine repairs—by using his stays."

"I've heard all about that," grumbled Clavering. "I'm beginning to wonder why the marvellous Captain Calver wasn't picked for this job. In any case—a hurricane is not an earthquake, and both are outside a spaceman's normal range of experience."

"There are hurricanes as well as earthquakes on Eblis," said Fosdick cheerfully, his teeth startlingly white in his gaunt, brown face as he grinned. "You'll be used to both by the time we leave."

"*If* we leave," said Clavering gloomily.

"We'll leave all right. Now, this plateau. It's an ideal base for our operations, affording a good landing ground for both 'planes and helicopters. As far as we can see from the photographs from space there's a fairly gradual slope down to the south'ard—it's almost more of a bluff than a plateau, really—that our tractors will be able to negotiate. All that you have to do is to set the ship down somewhere in the middle of it."

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"Easier said than done," remarked Clavering sarcastically.

He was far from happy about the project. He had been brought up in the big ships of the Trans-Galactic Clippers, in a service in which the biggest of all crimes is the hazarding of one's vessel. He had made landings only on planets with proper spaceports and adequate facilities. He had lived, until now, in an orderly Universe governed by wise rules and regulations. He was beginning to regret the winning of that huge lottery prize by the syndicate of which he was a member.

He said, "I'll have to send down probe rockets first."

"Of course, Captain. You're the spaceman—we're only passengers. The terms of your charter demand that you deliver us and our equipment on Eblis, that you maintain your ship as headquarters for the expedition. *How* you do it is up to you entirely."

"I'll need the help of your people in evaluating the data obtained by the probes."

"Of course."

"And my requirements are a stable landing ground and no winds over fifty knots."

"Now," said Fosdick, "you're asking too much."

Yes, thought Clavering, he had been asking too much. He and Larwood sat strapped in their chairs in Control while Fosdick and his team correlated the data being sent up from the surface of the planet below them. He looked out through the ports at the huge, ruddily glowing sphere. Whoever had named it Eblis had not exaggerated. It seemed impossible that any life could survive on its fierily hostile crust for longer than five seconds at the outside, no matter what cunning aids existed. He heard Fosdick and his men and women exclaiming happily—happily!—over each fresh piece of evidence. "Surface temperature 99.5° Centigrade!" "The wind force seventy knots!" "And what a wind! Straight hydrochloric acid gas!" "The radiation count's surprisingly low . . ." This in tones of disappointment. "Hullo! Free oxygen! What's that doing here?" "No trace of it from *my* rocket."

Larwood raised quizzical eyebrows. He murmured, "We seem to have let ourselves in for something, sir."

"You're telling me," agreed the Captain. "I thought that this was a good idea at the time that we drew up the charter—now I'm not so sure."

"Rokovsky's bellyaching as usual," said Larwood. "He's telling everybody that it'll be suicide to attempt a landing. Mary's quite keen, though. She has the idea that there might even be life of a sort on Eblis."

"And all that Sally Ann's worried about is getting the hire money," said Clavering.

Fosdick pulled himself over to them, handling himself in free fall

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with almost the ease of an experienced spaceman. He looked almost happy. He said, "How soon can you take her down, Captain Clavering?"

"As soon as I get a detailed report from your bright boys on what to expect," replied Clavering. "As soon as I get some data on wind velocities and on the nature of the terrain on the bluff, or the plateau, or whatever you've decided to call it. As soon as I can be assured that the ship won't be toppled over by an earth tremor as soon as she touches down."

"That last assurance I can't give you," said Fosdick.

"Then we don't land."

"I appreciate your feelings," said the scientist, "but I must remind you that according to the terms of the charter party you receive no hire money whatsoever until the landing is made. If you've brought us out here to have a look at Eblis from a safe distance then you, and you alone, are liable for the cost of our transportation for the round trip. Believe me, I hate having to hold a pistol at your head—but I have my job to do, just as you have yours."

"Sally Ann should have had more sense when she arranged the charter," said Larwood.

"We all read it," said Clavering. "Even Rokovsky was in agreement. And, after all, if we do lose the ship we don't lose financially."

"There are such minor matters as our lives and our certificates to be considered," said Larwood, grinning. "Still, it's a gamble, and I'm never one to turn a gamble down."

"I'm not a gambler," replied Clavering shortly.

"Well, Captain?" demanded Fosdick impatiently.

"You heard what I said," Clavering told him. "I'm not a gambler. I've no intention on gambling that the earth tremors will hold off long enough for me to set *Sally Ann* down on her beautiful backside and for me to get the spring stays rigged."

"So you refuse to land?"

"I never said that. I said that I wasn't gambling. I've devoted a deal of thought to the landing problems; I never believed that your plateau was the ideal spot you said it was. I worked on the assumption that it wasn't—and, as far as I can gather, the probe rockets have borne me out." He turned to his Mate. "Mr. Larwood—those stays are easily accessible, aren't they?"

"Of course, sir."

"Then I'd like them shackled on to the stem eyebolts right away. At the same time you can have numbers one and two boats ready for launching. You'll need four of those portable electric winches that Dr. Fosdick has among his equipment—I'm assuming, Doctor, that you're willing to lend them to me . . ."

"I don't see why I should."

"Do you want to land on this

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literally blasted planet, or don't you?"

"I do, but I can't see . . ."

"As you keep on reminding me —I'm the spaceman. Now, Mr. Larwood, these stays. I want them shackled on with the spring up. It's not the way they were supposed to be used, but it's the way that I'm using them."

"Spring up, sir," repeated Larwood.

"Good. Now, Dr. Fosdick, I'm going to ask you for volunteers. As you know, we don't carry a large crew. We haven't the personnel for what I have in mind. I'll want at least six of your men, all in radiation armor."

"You've thought of something," grumbled the scientist, "but what? And surely it would have been better if we had all discussed it in advance of our landing."

"That," said Clavering, "was the one thing that I didn't want to do. Landing a big ship is essentially a one man job. If he discusses the job first, other people will put forward their own schemes, some of them at least as good as his own. That way the seeds of doubt are sown and take root. That way, at a crucial moment there's just that second or so of hesitation, and the ship is lost. Understand one thing, please. I know what I'm going to do, and I think that it's the best way to do it."

"I think that we should know what you're going to do, too," said Fosdick. "After all, if we volunteer we have a right to be told what risks we're running."

"I take it that you're among the volunteers?" asked Clavering.

"Of course."

"All right. As you are aware, it might well be that a sudden earth tremor, a sudden gust of wind, will overset the ship at the very moment of landing. She'll be safe enough once the spring stays are rigged—but quite a lot can happen while they're being rigged. This is my plan. I send two boats down in advance of the ship under my Chief and Second Officers. Each boat will carry two of the portable winches, anchoring gear, and the volunteers. The volunteers will set up the winches and mark the landing site. We, in *Sally Ann,* will drop down as gently as possible, with the stays all ready to be fired to the ground by signal rockets. I considered landing with the stays trailing, but there's too much risk of their getting into the exhaust. As soon as the ends of the stays are on the ground they will be taken to the winches and heaved taut, and kept taut as the ship loses altitude . . ."

"You're putting a lot of trust in the winches and the ground anchors," said Fosdick.

"I have no option."

"And you say that *I'm* a gambler!" exclaimed Larwood.

"A calculated risk is not a gamble," replied Clavering stiffly. "Now, Mr. Larwood, you know what I want done, and why. I shall

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be obliged if you will begin making the necessary arrangements."

"Ay, ay, sir," replied Larwood smartly.

It should work, thought Clavering. It must work. As far as I know, no landing of this nature has ever been attempted before—at least, not with a spaceship. I've seen something similar done on Chassor, where the natives use big, gas-filled airships for transport—but a spaceship is not an airship. Even so, I'm substituting thrust for buoyancy, so there's not all that much difference . . .

The periscope showed him the terrain immediately below the ship. He could see the great daub of white pigment on the bare, red rock, the two boats well clear of it, the four winches, each standing in its own patch of white, the tiny, spacesuited figures of the two officers and the volunteers.

So far things were going well. He was finding it easy to keep Larwood's marker centered in the field of the periscope. Mary Larwood, with another three volunteers from among the scientists, was standing by in the airlock with the signal rockets, to which the thin, flexible but enormously strong stay wires had been shackled. To make a landing with an airlock door open was against all the rules of spacemanship—but in this case it had to be done.

Sally Ann was assisting in the control room; it was not the first time that she had done so. Short handed as the ship, her namesake was, it had often been necessary for officers to perform duties outside their own departments. She was watching the radar, calling the altitude readings at short, measured intervals.

"Seven hundred . . . Six-fifty . . . Six hundred . . . Five-fifty . . ."

"Airlock!" barked Clavering. "Fire one!"

"Fire one!" replied Mary Larwood's voice from the intercom speaker.

The missile came into the field of the periscope, trailing its plume of white exhaust smoke. It fell with deceptive slowness—the difference, thought Clavering, between objective and subjective time. It struck well clear of the winch for which it was aimed, burst in brief flame and flying fragments. Larwood's men pounced on it, took the end of the wire to the anchored winch.

"Fire two!" ordered Clavering.

"Fire two!"

The second rocket, to the Captain's dismay, was speeding straight for its target. He thought of increasing thrust to lift the ship, hoping thereby to twitch the line and throw the rocket out of its trajectory, knowing that with all the slack wire there was little hope that this could be done. His hand was about to descend on the firing keys when he saw the little rocket veer —it was, he learned later, an opportune gust of wind acting upon

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the vanes and the trailing line—and, it seemed to him, barely skim the winch. A miss, he thought relievedly, is as good as a mile.

Again Larwood and his men pounced, working with speed and efficiency.

"Landing party to *Sally Ann,*" came Larwood's voice, tinny and distorted, lacking depth. "Chief Officer to *Sally Ann*. First and second wires on winches."

"Up slack," ordered Clavering. Then—"Control to airlock. Fire three!"

"Fire three!"

There was a limited arc of fire from the open outer door of the airlock; even so, Mary Larwood contrived to place the rocket well clear of the first two. Clavering watched Larwood's men—fewer of them now, two of them were standing by winch controls—carry the end of the wire to the third winch.

"Control to landing party," he snapped. "Up slack. Control to airlock. Fire four!"

After a short interval Larwood reported, "All wires on winch barrels. Am taking up slack."

The scene below the ship, in the periscope field, quivered, as though watched through disturbed water. Stupidly, Clavering looked at his gauges and meters, wondering what was wrong, why he felt no vibration, realized that he was watching a severe earth tremor. He saw the landing party stagger and fall, saw the men at the winches cling to their machines desperately. Through the ports he saw that, even so, an even tension was being maintained on all four stays. The tremor was worsening, though. The driver of the northernmost winch was thrown from the seat of his machine. He must have clutched at the control lever as he fell. The wire tightened. Looking up, Clavering watched the powerful spring at the ship's stem opening.

"Larwood!" he called urgently.

Larwood had scrambled to his feet, was running unsteadily towards the runaway machine. The Second Officer, who had risen to a sitting position, was waving to the other drivers, making circling motions with his arms, obviously signalling to them to open up their own controls to maximum speed.

It was the southern winch that took the strain first—and as the weight came on it a dark fissure opened in the rock directly under it, directly in way of the screw pile anchor. The machine lurched over the ground, spilling its operator, climbing up its own wire.

Sally Ann tilted dangerously, in the direction of the overtaut stay to the northward.

When in doubt,
Get out!

The words of the old spaceman's rhyme flashed through Clavering's mind. But he couldn't get out. He was secured to the surface of the planet by three strong wires, by three screw piles. If he applied maximum thrust the wires *might*

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break or the piles pull out, at the risk of considerable damage to the ship and, even worse, severe casualties to the landing party.

He cut the drive.

Sally Ann fell, sickeningly. The red rocks rushed up to meet her, to crush her.

Clavering's hand fell heavily on the firing keys. The ship shuddered under maximum thrust, shuddered and checked her descent, started to lift. Swiftly Clavering reduced the power of his thundering jets, held the ship balanced there, thrust cancelling but not overcoming gravity. He realized that the wire of the runaway winch had sagged into the incandescent exhaust and had been parted, saw that the other three were once again under full control. He knew that there were now only three stays, and those not placed to the best advantage.

"Rokovsky," he said into the intercom. "I want you to get another wire along into the airlock, and I want it shackled on to the stem as soon as we touch. Larwood!"

"Sir?" answered the Chief Officer.

"You heard what I told Rokovsky. Can that winch and the screw pile be used again?"

"That winch is tough," replied Larwood, "and the thread of the pile's undamaged."

"Good. Get them set up again as near as possible to the old place. Is the tremor over?"

"Yes."

"Maintain the tension on the other stays. I'm coming in."

He dropped the ship without undue haste, yet without undue caution, careful, however, to defer landing until the winch was once again anchored. At the first quiver that told of contact with the surface he cut the drive. He sat back in his chair, conscious at last of the perspiration that had soaked his garments, grateful when Sally Ann got up from her own seat to stand beside him, her hand on his shoulder. He watched the spacesuited figures clambering up the hull outside the control room ports, heard faintly the clang of their armored feet and hands in the recessed rungs. He saw the wire snaking up after them, saw Larwood and his people running with the free end of it to the winch. He felt the ship tremble as, after what seemed an unconscionably long delay, the weight came on it.

Only then could he begin to relax, could he stare out of the ports at the desolate landscape, at the barren rocks, at the distant, heavily smoking, flaring volcanoes, at the ruddy sky with its glowing, ominous clouds scudding before the gale.

"Even so," said Sally Ann, "it's not as bad as Lorn."

Clavering, who had come to hate that planet during his vessel's long stay on its surface, agreed.

They were not long on the plateau.

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Fosdick had lost no time in sending out his exploring parties, both by land and by air. It had been the party that he was leading that had found the valley, an oasis in the burning aridity of the north polar regions. There was life in the valley—as, in fact, there was in many other regions of Eblis—both plant and animal. The surrounding hills shielded the valley from the noxious gales and the atmosphere was breathable by humans. There was a level plain, beside a river of barely more than lukewarm water, on which a ship could land. The valley was a Paradise compared with most of the planet—and it was like a medieval artist's conception of Hell.

Clavering, not reluctantly, had lifted the ship from the plateau, had taken her to the valley. It had been necessary to repeat the maneuver with the stay wires and winches—the new landing place and base was not free from earth tremors—but this time the operation had been carried out without mishap.

The time set for the expedition's return to Lorn approached.

Clavering, taking one last walk through the valley with Sally Ann, decided that he would be sorry to leave the place. It was pleasant to walk abroad without a spacesuit, lightly attired in shorts and shirt uniform, to feel the warm air on bare skin, to breathe that same air and to appreciate the not unpleasant tang given it by the diluted fumes from the distant volcanoes. There were no volcanoes in the valley itself—only two huge pillars of flaming, roaring natural gas and a half-dozen spectacular geysers.

By the river they walked, the steam from the warm water billowing about them, obscuring and still further distorting the outlines of the rocks tortured into towering, grotesque shapes by some long ago volcanic activity. Past trees and shrubs they walked, past the plants with their gnarled, convoluted trunks and stems, with the broad, jagged edged leaves that were black rather than green, over grass of the same sombre hue. But there was color in the crimson river and the crimson sky, in the clumps of monstrous fungi, mis-shapen monstrosities in orange and lemon yellow. Overhead, black, ragged silhouettes against the glowing sky, flapped the flying things, more bird than reptile, croaking dismally. A tribe of "devils"—horned, scaly beings built on the same lines as the Terran kangaroo—hopped to meet them, held out their claws for the candies that the explorers had learned to carry in their pockets.

"This place is frightening," said Sally Ann, "but it's not frightening in the real sense of the word, not any longer. It's like . . . It's like the scary rides and so on in a Fun Palace. You pay good money to be scared—but, all the time, at the back of your mind you aren't scared. You know it's all make-be-

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lieve. It's the same here. There's scenery like an old time artist's idea of Hell—the river could be a river of blood and these rocks could be the damned themselves, writhing in perpetual torment. Then we have the devils . . ." She paused to give some more candy to the most persistent of them. "We have the devils, the most evil looking beasts that I've seen on any world I've visited—and all that they're good for is scrounging chocolate . . .

"You know," she went on, "people pay to see far less convincing shows than this—and we're getting paid for seeing it. Oh, well, we'd better make the most of it. We have to take our load of scientists back to Lorn, and then we'll be back in the real Hell—the one in which we have to make enough money, somehow, to keep the ship running. When this charter expires there'll be nothing for us on the Rim . . ."

"So everybody keeps on telling me," said Clavering. "And Grimes told me something else, too. I've just remembered it."

"What was it?" she asked.

"Just one of the Rim World proverbs," he said.

She was a large hunk of ship was *Sally Ann,* too large and too imposing for the name she bore. She stood proudly in her berth at Port Forlorn, dwarfing cranes and gantries and administration buildings, towering high above *Rimgirl* and *Rimbird,* both typical units of the Rim Runners' fleet.

Commodore Grimes, Astronautical Superintendent for Rim Runners, looked out from the window of his office towards the big ship, screwing up his eyes against the steely glare of the westering sun. There was a certain admiration showing on his hard, pitted face as he said, "So you've done it, Captain. You're making that big white elephant of yours pay for her feed bills . . ."

"And there's a little left over for us," said Clavering, watching the embarking passengers moving up the ramp in a wonderfully steady stream.

"You'll have had expenses," said Grimes. "Setting up a permanent holiday camp on Eblis, for a start. And your advertising . . ."

"Your people did most of that for us," said Clavering. "Those excellent films made by the expedition have been showing to packed houses on all the Rim Worlds. As for the rest of it—the Universities are sharing the expense and, of course, the profits, which will help to finance their further explorations of Eblis."

"How did you think of it?" asked Grimes.

"It was something my wife said our last night in the valley. You've seen the films of it—it's a weird place, rather terrifying, yet with no real danger whatsoever. Even if there's an earthquake, the grass is soft, and the inflatable houses we've shipped out are earthquake proof anyhow. She said it was like

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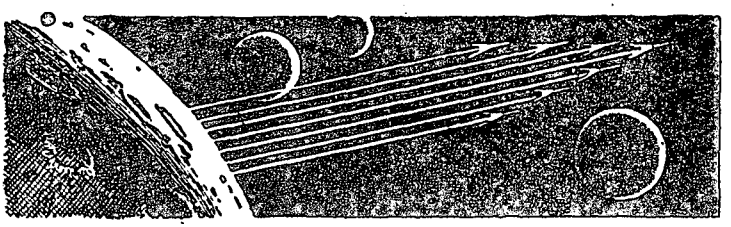
those scary sideshows in Fun Palaces—haunted houses and the like—that people pay good money to enter. They like to be frightened, as long as they know that it's a make-believe fright. Too, it's a change from Lorn and Faraway, Ultimo and Thule . . . Yes, and it was something that you said, too, that put me on to it."

"And what was that, Captain Clavering?"

" 'A man who comes out to the Rim to make his living,' " quoted Clavering, " 'would go to Hell for a pastime.' "



SCIENCE UNABLE TO CHALLENGE FAITH?

"It seems possible that we may be on the verge of settling by experimental observation which of the two main theories on the origin of the universe is correct," Professor A. C. B. Lovell, Professor of Radio Astronomy at the University of Manchester and director of the Jodrell Bank radio-telescope, said recently, in England. Once telescopes are carried in earth satellites or erected on the moon, astronomers may, at long last, be able to speak with unanimity about the ultimate cosmological problems.

There are two theories on the origin of the universe—gradual evolution, and continuous creation. The latter assumes that matter is being created all the time, and that the universe as we see it today will be just the same in a billion years' time.

Gradual evolution, however, presupposes the existence, in the beginning, of a gigantic primeval "atom," the disintegration of which has led to our expanding universe. Perhaps this "atom," was the total mass of the universe, compressed into an area a few hundred million miles across, and perhaps, consistent with the Divine command, "Let there be light," the atom simply consisted of a quantity of intense radiation.

If these ideas are correct, and the world did begin as a primeval atom, then the idea that this original creation was Divine can never be attacked by scientific means, Professor Lovell pointed out. "A set of conditions which existed over twenty billion years ago, and which can never return again, is forever beyond investigation."

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space control

by . . . Robert Andrea

Professor Mobius had escaped again. The peace of the galaxy was threatened. Only Lorrey might save it.

WHEN the Intergalactic Transceiver Station on Earth received word that Professor Mobius had again escaped from the penitentiary on Regulus II, they put in a rush call for Commander-in-Chief Fuzz Lorrey of Space Control.

Commander Lorrey responded immediately, along with his sidekick, Cadet Sappy, who has been a cadet for some time now.

As soon as the two spacemen arrived at the Transceiver Station, they checked in with the chief operator, a tall, well-figured brunette.

"Commander Lorrey," the operator said, "thank the galaxy you got my call!"

"I came as soon as I could!"

"That's right," Cadet Sappy said.

"What's the trouble, Miss?" Commander Lorrey asked.

The brunette operator sighed. "We just received word from Regulus II that Professor Mobius has escaped from confinement again. And when he's on the loose, there's no telling what might happen!"

"That's true," said Commander Lorrey. "We've got to catch him before he disrupts the peace of the galaxy."

Robert Andrea, back in this country after several years abroad, writes: "Someone, I believe it was Will Rogers, once said that there are only four cities in the U. S. that are different—New York, New Orleans, San Francisco and San Antonio. San Antonio does *have a distinctive charm. . . ."*

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"You're right, Commander," Cadet Sappy said.

"Thanks, Sappy." Commander Lorrey turned to the chief operator and quickly surveyed her well-formed figure. "Uh—by the way, Miss, I don't believe I got your name."

"Why, Commander, I didn't think you cared, not at a time like this, when Professor Mobius is free to harm the galaxy!"

"Ah, well, I've found it important to know the people I work with, Miss . . . what did you say your name was?"

"My name is Belinda, Commander. Belinda Gork."

"What a pretty name," the Commander said. "Belinda Gork. Yessirree, a mighty pretty name—and a mighty pretty girl, too!"

"That's right, Commander," Cadet Sappy said. "Gee whiz, what a mighty pretty girl. She's even prettier than the girl we had on Altair IV. Remember her? The one with the two—"

"That's enough, Cadet Sappy!" the Commander interrupted.

"Yes, sir. Sorry, sir."

"Now, to get back to you, Miss Gork," the Commander said. "I was wondering, that is, would you care to have dinner with me this evening?"

"Why, I'd love to, Commander," Miss Gork replied. "If you don't think Professor Mobius will upset the peace of the galaxy by then, I mean."

"I've already formed my plan for capturing Professor Mobius," Commander Lorrey said. "I'll pick you up about seven, all right?"

"That will be fine, Commander," Miss Gork said.

While Commander Lorrey and Cadet Sappy were dining with Miss Gork, an emergency call was flashed to the Intergalactic Transceiver Station. Since Miss Gork was missing, the call was taken by Carol Flax, the assistant chief operator, who was a small, pert blonde with big blue eyes, a large bosom and a petite, thin waist.

After receiving the emergency message Miss Flax rushed to the dine-o-mat where Commander Fuzz Lorrey, Miss Gork, and Cadet Sappy were eating.

"Commander Lorrey!" Miss Flax said, excitedly, "we've just received an emergency call from New York City! Professor Mobius has dropped a plutonium bomb in Trenton, New Jersey! The city is wiped out!"

Commander Lorrey munched on his food—a three-dip chocolate ice cream cone in synthetic form—and raised an eyebrow. "What did you say your name was, Miss?" he asked the assistant chief operator.

"I didn't say, Commander. But it's Carol Flax, if you must know."

"Nice name," the Commander said. "Now, what was that you were talking about?"

"I said that Professor Mobius has just dropped a plutonium bomb on Trenton, New Jersey. The city is completely destroyed!"

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"Great galaxy!" the Commander said. He turned to Cadet Sappy. "We've got to get Mobius before he upsets the galaxy, Sappy."

"You're right, sir."

"Let's go, Sappy. We've got to blast off for Mars immediately."

The Commander and Cadet Sappy left the dine-o-mat and made their way to their rocket ship. They got in and blasted off for Mars.

"What are we going to Mars for, Commander?" Cadet Sappy asked. "I thought Professor Mobius was on Earth, near New York City."

"He is, Sappy," the Commander answered. "That's why we're going to Mars. We'll be safe there!"

"Jumping Jupiter, you're right, Commander!"

After Commander Lorrey and Cadet Sappy landed on Mars they rushed to the Mars City Cabaret. They knew a girl there that had once worked at the Intergalactic Transceiver Station on Earth.

Unknown to them, however, Professor Mobius, after destroying Trenton, New Jersey, and threatening the rest of Earth, had blasted off for Mars. He, too, knew a girl that worked at the Mars City Cabaret.

Thus it was that Commander Lorrey and Cadet Sappy found themselves in the same room with that arch-criminal of the galaxy, the dangerous Professor Mobius.

"Holy Neptune!" Cadet Sappy said to Commander Lorrey. "What will we do, Commander?"

"We'll run to our spaceship and blast off for Venus," Commander Lorrey said. "We'll be safe there!"

"But Professor Mobius has already seen us," Cadet Sappy murmured. "In fact, he's looking at us right now!"

"You're right, Sappy. There's only one way out of this!"

"What's that, Commander?"

"We'll have to fight it out with him," the Commander said. He looked at Professor Mobius, who was still standing at the door of the cabaret and staring at them.

"Sappy," Commander Fuzz Lorrey said, "pull out your blaster and fire at him."

"Sizzling Saturn, Commander, if I reach for my blaster he'll burn me to a crisp!"

"Do what I say, Sappy!" the Commander ordered.

Suddenly there was a blast from behind the bar. Professor Mobius sank to the cabaret floor, dead. Commander Lorrey and Cadet Sappy turned their heads toward the bar to see who had fired. It was the cabaret girl they knew, the one that had once worked at the Intergalactic Transceiver Station on Earth.

She came out from behind the bar and walked to the table where Commander Lorrey and Cadet Sappy were sitting. "I just couldn't let either of you darlings get hurt," she said, very sweetly, "so I thought I'd help you out a bit."

Commander Lorrey's face grew stern. "We're grateful to you,

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Miss—Uh, I believe I've forgotten your name. But we could have handled the situation ourselves!"

"My name is Suzie Wang, Commander," the shapely beauty said. "I'm very sorry I interfered. I guess I let my emotions get the best of me." She fluttered her eyelids and gazed at the Commander.

"That's quite all right, Miss Wang," the Commander said, softening a bit. "Just be sure it doesn't happen again. After all, I have a reputation to maintain. As Commander-in-Chief of Space Control I'm responsible for guarding the peace of the galaxy!"

"That's right, Miss Wang," Cadet Sappy said, and with that lucid affirmation of Commander Fuzz Lorrey's responsibility still hanging in the air, the Commander and Cadet Sappy went back to their rocket ship and blasted off for Earth.

LEGAL CONTROLS FOR SPACE

Legal control of outer space, already within the reach of man, is a matter of considerable urgency, Spencer M. Beresford, special counsel of the House Committee on Science and Aeronautics, said recently at an American Rocket Society conference on space law and sociology. The conference, held here in New York in March, was attended by a special subcommittee of the House of Representatives, professionally interested members of U. N. delegations, and two hundred government and private specialists in the various problems of space exploration.

Space activities were admittedly difficult to classify, since many lend themselves to hostile as well as peaceful purposes (*vide* the observation satellite), but agreement on proscribed activities was far from an impossibility, Beresford maintained. Limited practical agreements had often been proposed in the west and these agreed in many particulars not only with one another but also with similar proposals from the Soviet bloc. Specifically, proposals had been made, from several sources, that satellites be supplied with identifying signs, that there be agreement on radio frequencies and the elimination of interference, that space vehicles remain the property of the launching state, *and* that the launching state be responsible for injury or damage caused by space vehicles. Proposals like these, Beresford declared, "could serve as starting points for the rule of law in outer space."

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what could they be?

by . . . Ivan T. Sanderson

Unidentified objects have been observed in our skies. What are the overall possibilities of their identity?

WE ARE now going to assume that not only are there as yet unidentified objects seen in our skies but that these are reported to be of an apparently endless variety of shapes, sizes, and proclivities. If you choose to disagree with this assumption or even if you feel that there is nothing mysterious about the concept by inclining to the view that they are all explicable as meteorological or astronomical phenomena, that is your prerogative. Nevertheless, neither should be cause for abandoning or ignoring other possibilities, and on proper consideration these are obviously of almost if not altogether unlimited range.

It appears that there is a very strong reluctance on the part of most people to do this. Curiously, I have found this attitude to be most pronounced among intelligent folk with technological training but lacking any proper grounding in true scientific methodology. Technologists and technicians—usually but quite erroneously referred to as "scientists"—are like dogs with bones. They like to be given a theory or a problem of, as far as possible, unit probability and then

Ivan T. Sanderson, who has been interested in Ufology for many years, concludes his challenging series of articles in which he has explored possible explanations of the phenomena. He is the author of numerous books including the recent MONKEY KINGDOM *and* LIVING MAMMALS OF THE WORLD *(Hanover).*

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be left alone to worry it until they prove it to be true or false. They seem to be appalled by and quite unable to comprehend anything wider in scope; particularly the mere contemplation of possibilities as opposed to probabilities. As soon as they are asked to consider more than one possibility, they set up a standard howl that invariably goes something like . . . "I can't be expected to waste my time disproving every crazy theory everybody can think up." Ignoring the fact that nobody asked them to do so, we may point out to all people who take this attitude that the totally uneducated often approach the truly scientific attitude much more closely than do the educated—not specifically educated in basic scientific method.

The real trouble with our present western civilization is that it has become so technological it has ceased to think altogether, so that it can only take on one thing at a time. If you go amongst peoples who have not yet adopted our approach, or been subjected to our form of education, you will find that they have a much wider concept of everything, especially nature. In the field of animal life, for instance, a Mayan villager in Yucatan or a Hill Batuk in Sumatra will not only be able to name almost every animal in his country, but will group them very nearly, if not exactly as a zoological taxonomist (a specialist in animal classification) does today after two centuries of what we call *scientific* studies. On the other hand, to the vast majority of us—including most zoologists, apart from taxonomists—a whale is a whale, a monkey a monkey, and an antelope an antelope. The very idea that there could be and are over 150 different kinds of whales varying in length from a minimum of six feet to 112 feet in length, and divided into at least two quite different categories that may not even be closely related is not only ignored but considered to be extremely irksome. If you suggest that there might be still other kinds of whales still to be discovered in the oceans, or worse, that there might be whale-like creatures on certain planets of other suns, the average person, and particularly the technical specialists, either just give up or become enraged.

To employ a parody that we have used before and will use often again, to say that there is *a thing* in our skies that has not been identified, is just like saying that there is only one kind of animal in the North Atlantic Ocean. It is so illogical it cannot be regarded as just stupid; it is manifestly an example of deliberate non-thinking. Similarly, the idea that theorizing is time-wasting, is not only an indication of mental sloth but also of lack of proper scientific training. The basis of science is the investigation of possibilities; the business of technology is the proving of probabilities, but to state that the investiga-

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tion of possibilities is a waste of time is clearly asinine. Before any new subject can be tackled technologically, it has first to be appraised scientifically, and this means a survey of all that is known or alleged to be known and of all possible possibilities and their systematic classification. This is the collecting and sorting (or taxonomic) stage through which all sciences have had to pass. This, as we have pointed out in earlier articles, has not as yet been done in the field that has come to be known as Ufology, or the *logos,* study of, unidentified flying objects. This is our objective in however crude a form, but it must be clearly understood that nobody is asking anybody to spend any time investigating any of these possibilities. That should come only after the possibilities have been reviewed and the most likely probabilities listed, and the most promising technological approaches to each fully considered with a view to proving them true or false, and in the end finding the hoped-for explanation.

Nevertheless, this is not all, for there is ever lurking in the background this deplorable menace to *all* research—the devastating misconception that there is or can be but a single explanation. The Atlantic Ocean is a fairly big place and is filled with many millions of different kinds of things. The Universe is extremely large and may well be filled with an infinity of different things. There is no single explanation of Ufos, but there is no harm in any number of people holding any number of theories, and there is nothing unscientific about some of them trying to investigate one or several of these, provided one and all bear in mind that the possibilities may be infinite and that the theories for investigation may therefore also be so. What we need to start with is as wide a classification of these possibilities as time and space will permit us to list within the framework of accepted logical imagination. And it is here that Pure Science and Science-Fiction meet: Applied-Science and Pure Fiction have no place in this field and, verily, its proponents show themselves to be incapable of understanding it.

Ufology is not as yet a science. The term itself is a bastard one but it is euphonious, short enough to go into newspaper column-heads, and simple enough for almost any moron to remember. It also, and alone, may have some chance of superseding that snide abomination, *flying-saucer,* which not only means nothing but is also a misnomer since, so far, the saucer shape is about the only one that has not yet been reported. The term *Ufo* is not a happy one, however, since the word *unidentified* automatically implies uncertainty, some of them may not be *objects* in the manner of speaking to which we have become accustomed, and very few of them appear ever to have been *flying.* Charles Fort referred to them as

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Osfs or *Objects seen Floating* (in the sky); a better term. If the U. S. Air Force had not beaten us to the punch with the term Ufo we might have suggested Emps, standing for extramundane phenomena, since this would include everything and anything that is not meteorological, including astronomical or cosmic items not yet claimed by those disciplines. The confines and extent of the subject may, nonetheless, be attempted and it would seem best to state this as anything within our atmosphere that is not claimed and explained by meteorology, or (in the case of birds, pollen, and volcanic ash) by zoology, botany or geology, and anything outside our atmosphere that has not been claimed by astronomy.

This, as will be readily appreciated, is a very vast field and if there is anything in it either physically or hypothetically, any attempt to fill it up with possibilities is going to be quite a task. Before proceeding to this, we must point out one or two side issues that need consideration. The first is to define the word *object*. This is not so easy as the dictionary might imply. For instance, the Universe may be considered to be an object; similarly, a true vacuum (if such exists or could be created) in what we call "space" could also be so regarded. In fact, the whole question at issue resolves itself in this inquiry so that what we really need first is a classification of possible objects. The other point to remember is that, should any, or as various kinds of Ufos *are* identified, they may well be claimed by other specialties. If some turned out to be life-forms, there would probably be a grand rumpus between the zoologists, botanists, and virologists; if some are machines manned by intelligent entities with solid bodies, anthropologists, chemists, and the engineers will be opening the pages of their textbooks to novelties. If *all* kinds of Ufos could ever be identified, Ufology would presumably retire into the dictionary. In the meantime, however, there is a vast field of ignorance here, filled with rumors and with other things going on in it, that calls out for investigation.

The question at issue, therefore, is to try to list the possibilities implied in the widest concept of *objects*. Now, this can be done in the form of a fairly compact list that is not overly subdivided as shown below. If you cover the right-hand column of this before reading it through, you may feel that most of it is perfectly whacky. What, you may well ask, can an "animate nonmaterial object" be; what, pray, are *seemingly* (quasi) material objects, especially artificial animate ones; and has anybody made an animal yet? But then, disclose the right-hand column and you will find that with two possible exceptions you have always readily accepted the existence of ten of these twelve major categories, and that you are probably willing to recognize one

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of them (No. 4) if the physicists say so, and may have little doubts about No. 5. Further, none of those concepts in any way conflicts with or offends whatever religious principles and beliefs you may have. There is place enough for any of the works of the Almighty in any of the major categories, and should *He* see fit to make those works known to us through either paraphysical or quasiphysical means, that is really no concern of ours nor of our inquiry. What is essential to realize is that not only are there all these possibilities but also that all of them exist already. There is, in fact, only one great problem and query. This is, does "A" exist?

This question, one might say, is the absolute rock bottom of all philosophy. It is the question that has been approached by all thinkers; and all *great* thinkers and all personages who have seemed to participate in what we call divinity have given the same answer—*and in the affirmative*. It is the teaching of Christ and of the Gautama Buddha; it was the thought of Lao Tze and Albert Schweitzer; it was the expressed opinion of Albert Einstein. Those who call themselves or who are called "scientists" but who lack either any breadth of concept and/or truly scientific mental train-

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A CLASSIFICATION OF OBJECTS

A. FROM OTHER SPACE-TIME CONTINUA (Universes)

B. WITHIN OUR UNIVERSE (Our space-time continuum)

I. *PARAPHYSICAL* (Non-Material)

(a) *Animate*

(1) Natural.....Thoughts, Hallucinations

(2) Artificial.....Induced hallucinations

(b) *Inanimate*

(3) Natural.....Radiation

(4) Artificial.....Induced energy packets

II. *QUASIPHYSICAL* (Projections)

(a) *Animate*

(5) Natural.....Ghosts, *etc.*

(6) Artificial.....Motion-Pictures

(b) *Inanimate*

(7) Natural.....Mirages, Astronomical observations

(8) Artificial.....Photographs

III. *PHYSICAL* (Material)

(a) *Animate*

(9) Natural.....Animals, Plants, Viruses

(10) Artificial.....Bioids, Mechanical Brains, Robots that learn

(b) *Inanimate*

(11) Natural....."Minerals"

(12) Artificial.....Machines

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ing, or both, retreat in confusion from any such thought. The very idea that the whole of "B" may be repeated endlessly in other space-time continua, and especially that any of their infinite manifestations may manifest themselves in our universe, so appalls them that they howl for release from their imagined obligation to "prove" the notion. They and all others like them who apparently deny all religion, philosophy, and science should read some Holy Writ, the works of the great philosophers, and the published statements of Albert Einstein. Meantime, the rest of us should contemplate this fact with the utmost solemnity. It could be the answer to much that puzzles us. But let us return to the matter of possibilities of another nature.

Within the universe as we know it, it becomes obvious that there is a distinction—even if not clearly defined—between objects that are material and those that are not. However, the question of *matter* itself is fraught with difficulty as any philosopher or physicist will tell you. Matter, as we know it, itself displays qualities of non-matter, and energy of matter. Resort may therefore be had to the dictionary wherefrom we come up with the idea of the physical, which is defined as "of nature or all matter; material." From this we might infer that the non-physical is "not of nature or all matter; and nonmaterial." Only a little consideration, nonetheless, will demonstrate that this is not the case, for there are manifestly things like thoughts, hallucinations, and quanta of energy that, while they may not constitute what we normally call "objects" are profoundly of nature but neither all of matter nor material at all. Therefore, if anything is nonphysical it presumably doesn't exist at all; so what to do with thoughts, radiations, and vacua (if they exist)? Being certainly *like* (*para*) physical objects, they may be so-called. To put it more simply —and undoubtedly over-simply, they exist alright, but they cannot be photographed. What then of things that are nonmaterial, nonphysical, but exist, which *can* be photographed? Which, in other words, are *seemingly* (quasi) physical?

These are items that have puzzled men since earliest ages and which still do. There are many human beings alive today who are utterly mystified by motion-pictures (*i.e.* films or movies). Many animals are positively horrified and terrified by them, like monkeys seeing snakes on a silver screen. Meteorologists are not a little mystified by some kinds of mirages; I have met intelligent grown men who were quite unable to "see" a still photograph. Few people really believe that the light from some stars entering our giant telescopes today is billions of years old; and, also, there is the perpetual agony about "ghosts." The basis of all this worry is lack of comprehension

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of some things we call reflection and opacity. Take these two thoughts before we proceed. Are there any phenomena in the universe more mysterious than a reflection in a mirror or the fact that you can see through glass and other solids?

There remain then the truly physical or material objects. The comprehension of such is what we call "natural" to all of us. This is the world we live in—the world that used so succinctly to be divided into *Animal, Vegetable,* and *Mineral,* but which today has become so much more complicated with animals being only mobile forms of vegetables, the latter split three ways and being clearly different from at least two other life-forms known as the viral and the cheminuclear, which in turn merge with one form of the mineral, and in fact even participate in both estates. Then again, there are the robots, the artificial forms of "life," as opposed to mere machines. But all of this comes later.

It thus appears that an object—and thus a Ufo or an Emp—could be of a wide variety of types. It could be inanimate or animate, in various degrees; and, paraphysical (an hallucination), quasiphysical (a mirage), or quite physical (a machine). Let us therefore take each of these possibilities and analyze them in relation to what we know or think we know of our universe, its conception, and function.

Entirely nonmaterial or unmaterial (paraphysical) objects, or perhaps we should say "things," may obviously be in the likeness either of animate or inanimate entities. There are many different ways in which they could be classified but if we follow that which we have chosen, we find that among the former there are, first, such things as thoughts, dreams, and what are often called hallucinations. All may be of the utmost reality and peopled with all manner of life-forms, remembered or imaginary. They have form and color, they move and act, they may even have volition. Then again, there are those who believe that there are also in this category a plethora of disembodied entities, complete in themselves, which they term ghosts, spirits, and so on but which these pragmatic persons prefer to regard as being entirely creations or figments of the mind. (This has nothing to do with the equivalent category of alleged entities or a quasiphysical nature). While the existence of thoughts and dreams can hardly be denied, that of ghosts and spirits can be, and almost universally is so. We prefer not to pursue this particular matter further for there is no evidence of any kind that any Ufo might have been a ghost. The matter of hallucinations is an entirely different affair.

Some remarkable facts have been learned about this phenomenon. Hallucinations may, it appears, be

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purely spontaneous or natural manifestations, or they may be induced by drugs such as the now famous mushroom-eating, or by shock, hunger, thirst, or even by excess boredom as disclosed by work carried out at McGill University. Objects occurring in hallucination appear to be of the utmost reality and in appropriate cases they may display all the attributes of animation. They cannot as yet be recorded directly as by photography, but they are alleged to be reproducible through the person concerned in the form of paintings and so forth. To what extent Ufos may be of this nature is at present almost impossible to say, but it may be stated with some degree of certainty that when the identical thing is reproduced by more than two people, it is likely not to be of this nature. There is absolutely no proof of the occurrence of that old pet of the psychologists—Mass-Hallucination.

Turning then to inanimate paraphysical or nonmaterial objects, we enter a realm of absolute reality—that of physics. The distinction herein between natural and artificial objects is a slim one, for while reproduction of many manifestations of such things as radiation can be accomplished by us, it is doubtful if we have ever actually *created* anything of this nature. To do such would conflict with the basic principle of the conservation of energy. However, such possibilities have been mooted in the nucleonic field and time alone will show whether there is any such possibility. Meantime, of course, other and superior intelligences may have long ago achieved just this, and it is presumably not impossible that machines could be constructed of pure energy. A Ufo of this nature might do some rather surprising things and it might be impossible to capture or even contact it while it might be able to affect us in many ways. Non-artificial, non-material inanimate objects are commonplace and that they might be of composite and complex structure and form individual objects is by no means impossible, highly probable, and possibly actual in the form of such as a magnetic field. There are many Ufological aficionados who favor this explanation of all or some of them, and it is a rather popular idea among serious-minded scientists who feel that while there is something up there, it will prove to be indigenous to our atmosphere and has a simple physical explanation. (A scientist would naturally and rightly class an isolated magnetic vortex as a physical object.)

Coming then to the details of the quasiphysical classes, we again meet first this extreme hypothetical problem of what we term collectively (for want of a better term) "ghosts." Do not forget that our distinction between the para- and the quasi-physical is that the former cannot be photographed, the latter can, but that this is a gross over-simplification. There is a cu-

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riously large body of early and ancient reports in the field of Ufology, mostly found in Charles Fort, and records also of what appeared to be vast "animals" seen in the sky. Any such thing would presumably be of a quasiphysical nature—in other words a form of mirage or "reflection" of something existing elsewhere in space or time, rather than a truly material object, though Fort in several instances equates rains of blood and other material substances with such apparitions. These fall into the purely physical or material category. Nonetheless, we can but suppose that if there are "ghosts" or "space monsters" somewhere they could be reflected or projected on to layers of hot air just like material objects on our Earth as seen in mirages. But there comes here an unpleasant thought.

We don't really understand mirages for there are those that can be photographed and others that apparently cannot, though seen simultaneously by large numbers of people. Also, there are alleged to be clear mirages of things that just don't exist on this Earth now but some of which did so in the past. There are several reports of ships of the wrong period in history as having been seen ploughing majestically along in the sky. Nobody has dared to contend that they *are* ancient ships; rather, that they are quasiphysical images of them. Even then, where do they come from and how do they get projected here and now?

Should such phenomena occur and more especially should one be photographed, we would be confronted with some very pertinent questions, one of which is obviously whether the original object is in our universe or in "A" in our list, or in another space-time continuum. Other possibilities would be that it is in our universe but at another time, or in another place *outside* (or inside?) the surface of our Earth. There is evidence that there are such mirages though this evidence is not of a nature to be acceptable to science as yet. It would be a splendid explanation of a lot of different kinds of Ufos.

But from this consideration come others, particularly anent artificial animate quasiphysical objects, leading us to speculate as to whether such mirages might not be in the nature of our own inventions in this field—namely, the Motion-Picture. What you view on the screen in a movie theater is a perfect example of a quasiphysical object or series of objects. Very few people have actually met a certain Mrs. Arthur Miller, but millions know one Marilyn Monroe most intimately by sight, sound, and almost when in full panoramic technicolor, by touch. Miss Monroe exists alright, but her image on the screen actually doesn't, although it moves, speaks, and acts, and is, in fact, most actively animate, and this is *not* a semantic quibble. Suppose that some Ufos might be but superprojections on layers of our atmos-

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phere technically devised by intelligent entities elsewhere? And let us hope that some photographic technician doesn't start screaming that he hasn't got time to disprove the notion.

Inanimate quasiphysical objects are of quite another ilk. Both natural and artificial examples exist aplenty. The simplest example again is photography, but still photography which is artificial. However, it is here that we really have to come to grips with two monumental conundrums, the first of which is again mirages.

Now, if you look up this business in any good textbook of optics or meteorology you will read the standard schoolbook explanation which sounds very simple and convincing. However, it does not always work, as a technical group to which I was once attached demonstrated to my complete satisfaction. The case was as simple as this. Mirages are supposed to be reflections in the sky—or, of course, on the ground or on surface water—of objects elsewhere and categorically beyond—*i.e.*, in a straight line, or more or less so allowing for some distortion and/or refraction; it could also be behind you. I was present when a large number of mirages were most scientifically observed on the open sea and their position fixed relative to the ship's known position, and not one of them (islands of various kinds, seen in great detail) existed anywhere either beyond or behind according to any chart, and they had the best. Where did they come from? Nonetheless, mirages do exist and can often be demonstrated to be reflection of known objects elsewhere in space.

The other conundrum is one that puzzles almost everybody but the professional astronomers. It is simply that a very large number of all astronomical sightings and photographs taken of them are nothing more than mirages—but time-mirages! A photograph of a star that is really a billion light years away may well be a picture of something that has not existed for ninety-nine million years; worse still, even if it still exists it may be halfway round the universe by now. It isn't there and yet one can see it and photograph it. This is quite unnerving. What if we can photograph Ufos that aren't there? Nor is this either a mere semantic quibble; it is a perfectly realistic supposition. And it is bad enough if there is an absolute upper limit to the speed of light. What if Einstein's suggestion that this speed is only a theoretical one at which there is a turn-over in the space-time relationship, is correct? How are we to know then just when the light rays that carry the image left and where from, for they might have originated in another space-time continuum and just "dropped through" into our universe by exceeding the speed of light as we know it. But here we get into the outer reaches of cosmology on the one hand and what

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is popularly known as metaphysics on the other. Be it noted, however, that there are many possibilities in the quasiphysical field.

So finally we come to the possibility that all or some Ufos might be properly physical material objects. There are here three distinct schools of thought when it comes to the question of Ufos. First, which is in the vast majority and includes almost all scientists, are those who consider them all to be inanimate natural phenomena and, for the most part indigenous to our planet. Second, there are many who believe—and usually very fervently at that—that they are mostly, if not all, artificial inanimate objects (*i.e.* machines) made by animate entities with intelligence somewhere outside this planet. The third are composed of a small but rapidly growing group who are beginning to feel that at least some of them are themselves natural, animate, physical entities (or Life-Forms) indigenous either to our upper atmosphere and/or to space itself.

I have, in addition, heard one man with proper scientific training and an extremely logical and sensible mind, suggest that they could be artificial animate life-forms (*i.e.* Bioids)—not just remotely controlled robotic machines like drone-planes or radio-controlled lawn mowers, but a thinking entity constructed by another thinking entity. Robots are no longer merely products of the imaginations of science-fiction writers. We already have, as everyone knows, machines that imitate thought but which do not as yet think; however, we also have at least one that somehow discovered, all on its own, how to *learn*. This was a mechanical tortoise-like device that fed on light and had a built-in circuit to make it go to meals but which also happened to have a simple circuit for certain sound reception also. To its manufacturer's amazement it learned when "soup was on" by sound alone, which it had *not* been built to do. The possibility of truly thinking robots as well as Bioids amounts to a probability of a high order and will certainly have to be taken into account.

Up to this point our whole discussion has been based on the assumption that there are *Ufos,* or *Emps* or whatever you choose to call them, or at least some material objects in the skies. As I said at the outset, you may choose to deny the fact—that is your prerogative—but to refuse to even consider the evidence is not. Furthermore, nobody has the right to decry investigations of the possibilities. Theorizing is neither a crime nor a waste of time, and nobody is asking you to do anything about it.

But ask yourself whether there *is* any factual evidence for the occurrence of these things and, if so, whether this evidence would indicate the existence of these three basic types.

And where do we go from there?

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human element

by . . . L. W. Hall

She'd grown under the praise and the scoldings, shared laughter and shared memories. And tonight it would happen.

ALIX retreated from the wide doors of the auditorium and tried to conceal herself behind the rubber tree that grew in a corner of the lobby. But it was too late. Mr. Kirilov had seen her. He pattered down the ramp and laid his pudgy hand on her arm. "Ah, the little balletomane! I knew you wouldn't miss *Swan Lake*."

She murmured a polite reply, hoping her veil was thick enough to hide her false eyelashes and exaggerated ballet makeup. He must not catch her now. They had planned and hoped too long. Of course it had been risky to come made up, but there wouldn't be time, once she got backstage.

"We have a new doll," the manager continued. "The best Odette-Odile the factory ever produced. She is perfection!"

"Another Fonteyn?" Alix tried not to sound scornful.

"But of course. One could believe it was Fonteyn herself. Wait till you see her." He glanced about the lobby. "I was hoping your father . . ."

"Please, Mr. Kirilov." Alix freed herself from the detaining hand. "It's nearly time for the overture."

"Certainly, my dear." He smiled

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his affable, childish smile and let her go, into the welcome darkness of the auditorium. She disliked Mr. Kirilov from his well-polished shoes to the top of his bald head. Everything about him was calculated to improve business, even his fake Russian name. His friendliness was too obvious; how nice for him that the daughter of Allyn Dentri, Minister of Public Entertainment, should enjoy ballet. She might even persuade her father to increase the theatre's subsidy.

Alix found her seat and turned to watch the audience drifting in. She couldn't afford to be irritated. She must be alert, ready for her cue. It was curious to think that those people with the anonymous faces had no idea of her tension, could not sense her excitement. She had seen that audience so many times before . . . bored, habitual, coming only because this was a genteel way of sustaining social contacts and showing off new furs. They had been the same ten years ago, when Alix Dentri was a skinny child clinging to her father's hand, shivering with anticipation of her first ballet.

She had been too small to see over the railing of the box and so she had stood, through the entire performance, her large fantastically dark eyes fixed upon the patterns of the dolls below. Dreaming over the movements and the lights and Tchaikowsky, she had followed her father to the hall and waited dutifully outside the bar while he fortified himself for *Les Sylphides,* which was still to come. He had wanted to take her home; one ballet was enough to fulfill his official inspection and it was past her bedtime but she had insisted that they stay. There, leaning against the wall, she had heard Maryusha's chuckle from a shadowed doorway and learned her glorious new discovery was only an imitation of something that no longer existed.

Maryusha had been over sixty then. She was almost eighty now, and her ankles were still slim although no longer smooth and white. Her hands were still expressive, her head erect and proud and fierce as an old eagle's. Her voice had been firm and authoritative, as it was still. "So you think that's dancing!"

The child was mute, startled out of her dream.

"Dolls! Puppets! Go see a movie of Pavlova, child. Or the Degas painting in the lobby. That has more to do with dance than this!"

"I think they're beautiful!" Alix came to the defense of her newfound enthusiasm with the spoiled petulance that worked so well on Nurse.

"Only because you never saw anything better," said the old woman more quietly. "What's a Fonteyn doll or a Danilova doll when you've seen Fonteyn and Danilova in life? There was beauty for you. There was dancing. What's the thrill of watching a machine? You wind it up five turns; you get five pirouettes. It's only to be expected."

"Did you see Fonteyn and Dani-

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lova . . . the real ones, I mean?" Alix probed the wrinkled face incredulously.

"I saw all of them, child, all of them." The hazel eyes grew young again with a warmth of memories.

"And were they more . . . more wonderful than these?"

"Ever so much."

"Then why . . .?"

"I don't know, child. Perhaps because the robots were a novelty. Or perhaps because people were so insecure at the beginning of the atomic age that they only trusted machines. Do you know some young people on a television program actually let a computer pick who they should marry? But, for whatever reason, they brought in the dolls. I remember that first one." Her voice grew dreamy, and she rested her hand on Alix's head. "I was to have danced *Odette* . . . my first time before an audience . . . and then, that very night, they got *her*. I hated her. I would have jammed her circuits if I'd known how. But the audience thought she was exquisite."

"You mean you can . . ." Alix was tremulous with wonder.

"I *could*. But that was years ago." The old voice turned bitter.

"I wish I could learn how to dance." The wish was tentative as yet, half-formed in her mind. "I wonder if you could show me."

"Why? To spend your life scrubbing floors in a theatre the way I do? No. There aren't any dancers anymore."

"I want to learn!" cried Alix shrilly, on the edge of her tantrum voice. She was a stubborn child; a hint of refusal was enough to make her insistent. "Teach me! Teach me to dance!"

The old woman stood silent. A strange, crafty smile crept over her face. "What is your name?" she said at last.

"Alix . . . Alix Dentri." Her feet shifted uneasily. She was beginning to think she had said too much. She wanted to run back to her father's box. This was not Daddy or Nurse; there was something about this woman different from the people she was accustomed to.

"Allyn Dentri's daughter. So." The smile widened. "And you want to dance. How much, I wonder?"

Alix hesitated. She was used to being humored, but it startled her to be taken seriously.

"How much?" the old woman pursued. "Enough to come here every day? Enough to give up your candy and desserts, your after-school games, maybe even your friends?"

"Yes!" Alix was suddenly sure of herself. "More than anything!" Self-denial was a fascinating new possibility. She thrilled with pride at having made her first mature decision.

The old woman knelt swiftly, caught the child's shoulders, and looked deep into her eyes. "You will dance, little Alix. But you must never tell anyone. Never, do you understand?"

And she hadn't, not in ten years. Every afternoon she had hurried

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from school to the back of the theatre, to the large bare room where Maryusha lived. Ten years of lying: "Daddy, I have to go to the library . . . Daddy, my class is visiting the museum . . . the Ambassador's wife has asked me to spend the weekend . . . No cake, thank you, I'm not feeling too well." Ten years of work: at the *barré* with Maryusha's stick raising bruises on her pampered body, in center floor with Maryusha's rough-voiced nephew making fun of her and mimicking her awkwardness. Ten years of secret pleasure: the good tiredness, the genuine hunger, the savor of steak and salad while she sat crosslegged in her tights listening to stories of the old days which for Maryusha were the only ones.

She had wallowed in the scoldings, the praise, the shared laughter, the memories. She had grown strong and slender and exquisitely poised. The nephew, Johnny, had also changed; from a scornful, freckled nuisance to a smooth-muscled, agile young man who saw to the moving of Mr. Kirilov's scenery with absolute precision. His mockery toward Alix had let to competition, to partnership, to moonlight pas-de-deux on the empty stage, imagining the orchestra and an audience that was never there.

Tonight, for Alix, it would be. Tonight the first live ballerina in fifty years would step upon that stage and imitate a robot. She smiled at the musicians tuning up. How had they survived? Was it only because no spectator could be induced to buy a seat in the orchestra pit and the chairs would look so empty? They seemed bored; they didn't like to play for machines. But tonight they would play for her.

The house lights dimmed. That was her signal, now! She slipped out of her chair and through the curtained door at the base of the proscenium. Maryusha was waiting at the top of the steps and hurried her into the little dressing room that was still marked with a faded gilt star.

Mr. Kirilov's pride, the new Fonteyn doll, lay motionless on the floor, her wires and controls hopelessly twisted, her plastic face hammered in. Maryusha had revenged herself thoroughly. Now she hurried Alix out of the dark, confining street dress. The warmup, time consuming but indispensable: "Plié . . . hair, good . . . you need a touch more eyeshadow . . . relève . . . steady, child, a ballerina has no nerves . . ."

The overture was finished. A faint, bored applause greeted the opening of the first act. Plié, deep and sure and strong. Let them wait; there would soon be something to applaud for. Now the peasant dolls were dancing. The shiver of anxiety was stilled, the muscles warm and alive and responsive.

"Your costume," said Maryusha. She was holding out the doll's *tutu*, fluffy and immaculate. Alix slipped into it, submitted to the eyeshadow

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and a last powdering, anchored the doll's crown firmly on her head. Maryusha stitched the ribbons of the toe shoes in place, those shining pink shoes stolen from the dolls and guarded carefully because so few came in Alix's size. Somewhere beyond the door, Johnny was sending the stagehands out for coffee, clearing the way for her. He would watch Odette from behind a curtain, and no one would ever know there was a Prince Siegfried underneath the faded jeans and rumpled shirt. It wasn't fair, she thought; he had a right to be on stage too. But he was responsible for the scenery, and they had decided the risk was exorbitant. This way, he could stay at his post and allay the suspicion of anyone who ventured behind the set.

Act two began, the music of the hunters and the swans. Then it was her turn. She was out there, exposed to all the eyes. She heard the usual soft indrawn breath of the audience as the spotlight fell upon the enchanted swan, white statue in a darkened forest, statue that could move and leap and turn. Then she heard only the music; she was Odette. The sharp, birdlike movements were hers. Everything was right. Everything was just as it had been for the other one, the robot.

The prince was on stage with her, the doll-prince whose face was set in carefully regulated admiration. He approached; she mimed the story of her enchantment; he touched her hand. Alix had a queer sense of misgiving at that cold touch. She thought there was a flicker in the mechanical eyes. But it wasn't important. She was dancing.

She came to the robot with confidence. After all, his pattern was predetermined, and it was a pattern she knew as well as she knew her own limbs. He lifted her. But something was wrong. The lift came a fraction of a second behind the music, behind her spring. She didn't go as high as she should, and she came down harder than she expected.

Alix struggled to maintain her composure. The robot couldn't make a mistake; her own timing must be a little off. She sank into the plié of preparation and soared again. This time it was even worse. The doll swung her inches to the right, out of line. She almost stumbled, and her next movement was shaky. A murmur rippled through the audience. The robot's face swung across her vision, with a strangely malevolent smile.

It couldn't be happening. The doll had no brain, no will. It couldn't resent her and purposely ruin her performance. Or could it? She remembered fleetingly how her father's typograph, from apparently jammed and useless keys, had transcribed his annoyed curse and thrown it back at him. Was there more to a machine than people realized? No, it was impossible. Johnny would say the warmth of her body had interfered with the delicate

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mechanism . . . that there was a perfectly logical cause. But something was wrong, something she could not control. She fought for balance, thrown to one side or the other every time the doll touched her. It was not an immaculate performance now. It was sloppy and she knew it. So did the audience. An ugly sound came from them. But she kept dancing, by a supreme effort of will. She was on stage at last and no mere robot was going to take it way from her.

The frantic struggle ended. Gratefully she welcomed the variations, his and hers. He couldn't fight her when she was dancing alone. Relief surged through her, gave her added buoyancy. The subdued disapproval of the audience no longer bothered her. She was again absorbed in the role. She danced better than she ever had before. The angry murmur faded, changed to applause. She had never heard anyone applaud the dolls, except politely at the end. She was happy. But the *coda* would follow, and two more acts. The slow mechanical intelligence would have time to plot some real mishaps.

The house rang. Not for the doll, she knew; his highest leaps seemed to pass unnoticed. But for her there were cheers, muffled bravos. From a ballet audience? She was astonished. And she had no time for wondering, because now came the *coda*, the touch of that cool plastic animated with hatred.

The prince's hand touched her. She started. It was a warm hand, a human hand. She stole a quick sidelong glance at her partner. It was Johnny! . . . Johnny in an old Siegfried costume, discarded the week before, but who cared if the braid was a little faded? Now they were together as they had been a thousand times. Now the audience watched something that was really dance.

The music changed. The evil magician appeared to tear her from Johnny's arms, and this time his malignancy was real, actual. The doll knew this human Odette, this human Siegfried threatened his power as the lovers threatened the magician in the story; Alix, watching the contorted plastic face, was sure of it. But the curtain was down now, and beyond it the audience was in an uproar.

She stumbled over a headless plastic prince, into Johnny's arms. No time for explanations, only a quick embrace. Because near the control board stood Maryusha, her expressive hands cuffed together, and beside her a policeman. So soon? Of course . . . there were always four of them in the lobby. A heavy hand grasped her arm. "Sorry, miss, you'll have to come with me."

They had all known it would happen, from the beginning. The Occupations Law, and Mr. Kirilov would prefer charges for destroying his property. They had thought it was worth it. But not now, not before they were finished. "Let go of me!" cried Alix, turning swiftly and kick-

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ing at the man's shins. He released her with a yell of pain; blocked toe shoes were a dangerous weapon. She looked at Johnny. He was struggling ineffectively against two of them. The man made another grab at her, warily avoiding her feet.

But then came a surprising interruption. Mr. Kirilov pushed through the crowd that was gathering in the door. "Let that girl alone!" he snapped. Everyone turned to him in disbelief. Didn't he have every reason for encouraging the arrest? "Don't you touch her," he shrilled at the policeman. "She's got to go on that stage for two more acts. I can't send my audience home. We promised them the complete *Swan Lake,* and the complete *Swan Lake* we will have."

Alix grinned. She knew what he was thinking. The tumult beyond the curtain meant money in his pocket. Well, why not? That was as good a motive as any, providing you were on the right side. The little man beamed at her, and she found herself liking him.

"But they've broken the law!" the policeman protested.

"The dolls are ruined," said Mr. Kirilov firmly. "They've got to finish what they started. Besides, it might be wise for you to check with your headquarters . . . the girl's father is a Cabinet Minister."

The policemen looked at one another uncertainly. Then they released Johnny, took the handcuffs off Maryusha, and sat down on a pile of sandbags to hold a conference. Mr. Kirilov embraced Alix. "You were fabulous, my dear. Now run and change your costume. I've called your father . . . this he has to see!"

Acts three and four were glorious. Even the music had a spirit she had never heard before. She could see the conductor's face and knew he was remembering the time before the dolls. She was Odile, the black swan, brilliant, flirtatious, precise. The audience was not bewildered now. There was no hesitation in the applause. The bravos were loud and enthusiastic. Alix suddenly knew what Maryusha meant by "real dance." Those people were not cheering for her but for themselves. They wanted perfection, yes, but not mechanical perfection. The dolls were built to execute such movements; human beings, like Alix Dentri, were not. Wind up a doll thirty-two times and you get thirty-two fouéttes, obviously. But for Alix Dentri, thirty-two fouéttes were an achievement: human will conquering human limitations, attaining an impossible, absolute standard that was a triumph for them, too, where they sat, as no doll could ever be. And when she did even more, with the conductor smiling to urge her on, the house went wild.

She was Odette again, in the woodland, making her tragic departure from her prince. There was her final leap, the swan theme shifting from the minor to an exultant major as the evil magician collapsed in defeat, and the rippling music of the apotheosis, the smiling bows

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in front of the curtain, even roses . . . where Mr. Kirilov had gotten them on such short notice she couldn't imagine.

Then it was over. She fled into the backstage dimness, into her father's arms. "Alix! Baby!" Why, he was crying.

"I had to do it, Daddy. Sometimes there are things you just have to do." She was a child again, awaiting her punishment.

He was not angry. "They're going to arrest you, Alix." His voice was only quiet and sad, as he turned to the waiting police.

"I know," she said, smiling. It was all right now. She had finished. People pushed close around her, asked for her autograph. There was a crowd around Johnny, too.

"You won't be convicted," said Mr. Kirilov. "My lawyers are working on it now. And I'm arranging a contract . . ."

Alix gave him a quick hug. Then she broke away from all of them. There was something else she had to do. Maryusha stood on the empty stage, an old, crumpled woman. The eagle look was gone from her face. No one crowded around her with eager congratulations; even the police had forgotten her. She was alone with the memory of all those wasted years.

Alix ran to her and clasped her in her strong young arms. "Thank you," she murmured. "Thank you so much."

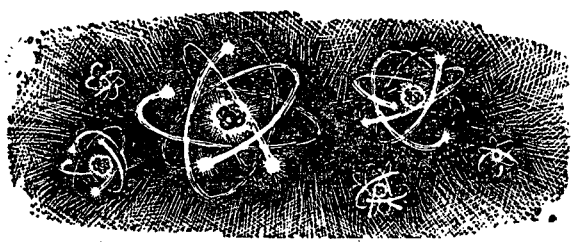
"You did it," said Maryusha bleakly.

"No," said Alix, "no." She must make Maryusha realize how much she needed her. She was Maryusha's creation. "Was I good?" she asked humbly. "Really, I mean?"

Maryusha smiled and raised her eyes. Her shoulders straightened; her head lifted erect with something of the swan's dignity. "You can do better," she said. "You will do better."

Alix nodded. And at last she turned to the police. "All right," she said, "let's go."

She led the way down the aisles of the auditorium, through the cheering, jostling crowd. It was not an arrest. It was a march of triumph.



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one for the road

by . . . Kate Wilhelm

Dr. Moray had adlibbed that remark about radioactivity — and the entire world had become galvanized with fear.

WARREN approached the house warily, not obviously searching the surrounding woods, but scanning them carefully, nevertheless, although he could see nothing in the moonless night. He heard a snapping sound to his right and froze into immobility instantly. One hand was gripping with paralyzing tightness the borrowed gun as once more he continued, convincing himself that it must have been a small animal, a rabbit or a squirrel. He remembered grimly the serious warning his chief had given him along with the gun, "Use it if you have to and get the hell out fast! And get back here if you have to crawl. We need you."

In the distance he could hear the intermittent firing of small arms and only occasionally the carrying booming of the cannon and mortar. They would be this way eventually, he knew, but not for the next day or so, if the breaks were with him. They were being thorough. And no matter how anxious to find his kind, they couldn't cover the ground between his home and the city in less than two days and probably it would be three.

He had reached the edge of the

Mrs. Kate Wilhelm writes that there are two little boys aged nine and five who do their best to keep her busy. There is also a cat and a dog, a house (in Kentucky) and nearly an acre of yard bordered on two sides by perennial flowers. This story was written before the recent newspaper headlines.

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woods and once more stopped his silent passage through the underbrush. The house was less than two hundred yards before him. No covering trees there for concealment, only the much too high grass because he'd put off cutting it for three weeks now. He didn't like yard work. The low ranchhouse, a replica of millions like it scattered in suburban America was dark, tightly closed, quiet. Amy had followed his instructions at any rate. He ran the distance separating him from his family and was just melting into the shadow of the empty carport when he heard the approaching automobile. An instant later its lights lit up the narrow road and an extra, brighter light played along the walls of the house. A searchlight. They must have got word about him somehow. From the helicopter, maybe, the way it came in or the way it turned to return to New York. Or anywhere.

In desperation he inched his way up the wrought iron column that supported the carport, praying silently that its fragile look was deceptive, and then bellied his way along the roof to the rear of the house. He made no sound.

The car had stopped and three men jumped out. There was no conversation as they waited for the bell to be answered. Their silence was grim and more ominous than threats would have been. The house stayed quiet and one of them began to hammer on the door. It opened. Warren could see the illumination spread as it was forced open wider. One of the men said, "Are you Mrs. Staley?"

Amy's reply was inaudible to him on the roof top.

"I want to ask you some questions, Mrs. Staley. While you are talking to me, these men will look over your house." He asked nothing, his manner curt and authoritative.

"Who are you? What do you want with me?" Amy sounded frightened now and her voice raised with her fear.

"Just calm down, ma'm. Where is your husband?"

Warren forced himself to keep his head down when he heard the back door slam and knew that one of them was looking about the yard. The nearly flat roof wouldn't hide him from a direct look if the idea occurred to the hunter. From the corner of his eye he could see the glow from a small flashlight as it poked among the flower beds and along the shrubbery. Then the door opened and closed again. Once more he concentrated on the snatches of the conversation he could catch from the front of the house. Amy had again controlled herself and her replies were in a subdued murmur. From the questions he could hear, he realized that they didn't know about him yet. A spot check. They would be back though. They had seized graduate records from the universities, and would be checking the science majors. They would be back.

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"That's all, Mrs. Staley. Just do like the radio said and stay in the house. If your husband is an accountant, he's probably helping them out in the city, just like we out here are doing. So don't worry about him."

Thunder sounded from the south and lingered reverberatingly in the still air, and one of the men whined, "Come on. Let's get back. I don't want to be out in any more rain as long as I live." They talked in low tones for a second and as the first drops of rain fell, they all ran for the car. They would quit for the night now.

Warren waited until the car had disappeared around the curve of the road and only the spattering of the raindrops was to be heard before he moved from his prone position on the roof. Cautiously he eased his way down to the edge of the slight incline and then let himself drop to the ground. Remembering the tell-tale rectangle of light from the front door, he let himself in the back way with his key. He was shaking the rain from his coat when Amy came into the kitchen, a gun leveled at his stomach.

"Warren!" She let the gun fall with a clatter and ran to him sobbing in her relief. For an instant she clung to him shaking, unable to speak. Then she took in his wet clothing and she paled more. "Warren! You've been in the rain! Take them off!" She began pulling at his coat frantically, abruptly stopped and ordered him, "Take them off right now. I'll get some others for you. But you have to shower first."

Warren pulled her back into the room. "Amy, Amy, you too?" He sighed wearily. "The rain isn't dangerously radioactive." The words came out flat from too much reiteration, "You could stand in it a year and it wouldn't hurt you. Over and over we're saying it, have said it, and will continue to say it, but still no one will believe us. Honey, it's all right." At the look of continuing doubt in her eyes, he shrugged hopelessly and started to take off the coat. "Okay, honey. But only because it isn't comfortable being wet."

Amy brought his robe to the bathroom while he showered. She had insisted and he hadn't the strength to resist. The shower was cool and hard against his skin, and for the first time for a week, he realized how tired he really was. He closed his eyes and let the stinging water beat the tiredness out of his bones, out of his mind.

Only a week since the world had been sane, and orderly in its own fashion of disorderliness. Reluctantly he turned off the water and rubbed himself briskly with the oversized towel. He followed the scent of coffee toward the kitchen tying his robe about him as he went. He paused for a long minute at the doorway of the boys' room. Timmy was hanging half way out of his bed as always, and Larry was in that impossible posi-

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tion of knees and chest that two-year-olds find so comfortable. He resisted the impulse to awaken them for a goodnight kiss, and settled for the long look.

"How is it in town?" Amy was cool and efficient, only her eyes displaying the terrible anxiety the week had brought her. She was a worrier way down where it didn't show. The outside she presented to the world was always very much in possession of her methodical mind. Only tonight she had shown the strain twice and now her face was drawn and unreal looking, and her voice, naturally low and throaty, was consciously restrained.

"Pretty bad. All hell has broken loose, and God only knows where it will end." Warren refused to let his mind dwell on the riots in town and asked instead, "Was that the first time anyone has come here?"

"Yes. After you called Tuesday, I stayed here. No one has been by at all. But I keep hearing shots and there were fires down in the village. I could see the glare." She brought his eggs and ham then and sat opposite him as he started to eat. "Warren, I don't understand what is happening."

"No one else does either, honey. The whole world has gone crazy all at once. London, Paris, Moscow, Bombay, Bonn. Everywhere the reports were of rioting and panic, and then silence. No more radio or television. The ham sets bring in some news, of course, but it's all just like our own. The people are taking over, scientists and their works being destroyed as fast as the people can get to them." He was eating and talking automatically, without emotion.

It had come as a shock to realize that all over the world the masses of people had rebelled at the same time with apparently the same reason and the same means of carrying out their purpose. Numbers, force of numbers. The incredible force of numbers rising in revolt against science. He pushed it aside and said urgently, "But we'll talk about that later. I only have a few hours, and I have to clean out my safe here and be ready to get the helicopter again. Tomorrow a helicopter will pick up you and the boys and take you to the mountains. There is a lodge. Some of the other women will be there by the time you get there. You'll be safe there until I can join you."

"Warren, I just can't go off like that! What about the house? And you? They think you are an accountant, not a scientist." She gasped incredulously then as the implication of what he had said reached her. "Do you mean the government can't control this? It might go on and on?"

Warren had experienced her surprise when he first faced the appalling fact that the government right now was only a voice that commanded without the means to enforce orders. And no one listened to that voice. Tuesday he had been

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so sure that it was a momentary thing. They would go home and sleep it off, and that would be that. They set a few fires, and broke a few windows, but that would be the end of the worst riot New York had ever witnessed. Wednesday it had been worse, and Thursday the whole country was doing it.

He said, "Amy, you have to trust me. This is more than just a few malcontents blowing steam. It's the majority of the people. For nearly twenty years they have lived under the shadow of the bombs and the fear of radioactivity and Monday's telecast of that crackpot doctor was the fuse that blew the lid." He didn't know how to tell her, couldn't find the right words to say that the world had come apart at the seams. Monday night had been the deciding factor, and one no one had foreseen. Dr. Moray had adlibbed that remark about radioactivity and the world had become galvanized with fear. The telecast had been world wide. A panel discussion of results compiled into a world report on the great findings of the geophysical year. A non-political discussion that even the Russians had accepted as harmless for their people to see and hear, especially since they were being represented by one of their leading scientists.

The doctor had said in reply to a question about longevity, "Purely academic, at the rate we're poisoning the atmosphere with radioactivity, three out of four persons now living will die from cancer anyway." The censors had cut the program before he could continue that —barring accidents, and barring another war, *cancer was the only major killer left, regardless of additional radioactivity in the atmosphere.*

The following day the devil stalked the earth and fired the people. It had been said at various times in numerous ways that the fallout was endangering the race, but that one remark heard simultaneously throughout the world had been the deciding factor. Twenty years of cold wars, of fears, of drafts and high taxes, all in the non-touchable realm of government, but science and its high priests could be got at, chopped down, exorcised and obliterated. In six days man created the laboratory and in the seventh, he destroyed it.

Tuesday had been normal when he had left home. He had parked the car at the train station as always and sat chatting with his nearest neighbor all the way to the city. He made it a point not to talk about his work ever. They all thought he was an accountant, and he managed to give the impression that he was a disgruntled one at that, preferring not to remind himself of the revolting job he had.

The conversation with his neighbor had started out innocently enough. He had made some innane comment about the weather. They

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always discussed weather, taxes, the current sport, and cars. In that order. He had opened with the suggestion that they could use some rain.

"Hope it doesn't start until I get home. I sure don't want to get out in the rain anymore. Shame, isn't it? When I was a kid, there wasn't anything I liked better than walking in the rain. But guess that's all over now like so many of the things." He shifted noisily and glanced down the aisle way toward a small quiet looking man who rode the suburban train each morning. "Say, do you know that fellow?" He inclined his head, but admonished, "Don't make a point of looking, but turn and see."

"Why?" Warren grinned. "Think he's wanted or something?" He glanced back and asked, "He rides all the time, doesn't he? Looks like a clerk or something."

"Think so? I think he looks like a scientist. You know, sly and deep looking like he's thinking of something new to invent to kill people with." There was malice and fear in the tone, and the man's soft looking face had grown hard and cold with hate as he turned once more to look at the little man. He was silent for a moment then as he worked his full lips.

Warren realized that he was memorizing the little man's appearance. That was the first he noticed out of ordinary that day.

Abruptly his traveling companion had said, "What do you think about what the doctor said last night?"

Inwardly Warren had prepared himself for the question, summarizing what he, in his role of accountant, could be expected to know about radioactivity. He didn't get the opportunity to express himself however. The other continued in a hurried tone.

"We were down in the lodge hall last night when he was on. My wife picked me up later and came in for awhile. She and the other women heard him. We don't like it. Those scientists make me sick. Pretending to be trying to make life better with new medicines and inventions. All they care about is finding out the best way to get rid of most people fastest. I read all about how the earth is supposed to get more and more crowded each year until there won't be enough food to go around, so now the scientists are taking care of that problem by poisoning everyone with radioactivity." The words came out in a rush, pent up words that had sought release for years. The subconscious thoughts of the man had dwelt on the fear of the bomb for so long that he couldn't control his emotions once the words started out. He was pale now where he had been florid, tense where he had been sublimely at ease.

Warren felt mildly shocked that he hadn't realized the extent of the fear that everyone knew was present. They had known for some years, hence the need for the cover-

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up jobs for the people in the Institute. Jobs such as lawyers, accountants, ad men, anything was more acceptable than scientist. Now he was glad that Amy had finally convinced him to set himself up in the eyes of their new neighbors as an accountant. He had scoffed, had begrudged the time the new location required for the daily trips into town, had missed the closer association with his colleagues, had hated the almost daily chores he found himself doing instead of hiring someone else to do. He found himself suddenly wordless before the accusations of the man beside him. This was no new formed idea that had come to the man. He had obviously thought about it considerably and at great length, coming to his conclusion long ago that all his fears were to be laid directly at the feet of the scientists.

Warren looked cautiously about then, and everywhere in the car saw little huddles of men speaking quietly, intently, seriously. He was glad when his stop finally came and he alighted.

In town it was so much worse. Workers with their lunch pails stood in groups, not making any noise. Just talking. A bunch of women stood before the branch office of the telephone company. Just talking. Taxi drivers, four of them, oblivious of his presence until he touched one of them on the shoulder. Just talking.

"Science Institute? Sorry, mister. Better take the subway. Two cars got turned over going in there a while back." They stared curiously at him as he walked away, until he disappeared around the corner toward the subway.

He changed his mind before he got the subway, though. He had an inkling of what it would be like. Just talking. For now. What would come of it? With a frown of annoyance he realized that he was frightened. Not for himself, not of personal danger, but for the Institute, for science itself. It could be damaging in so many ways. Appropriations indirectly from the people through their congressmen. School curriculums indirectly through their backers. He had felt anger mostly that Tuesday. Obviously his office would bear the brunt of the blame. Public relations always did when a howl arose. They must have failed to convince anyone, if one inadvertent remark on television could set off so many people. The chief would be hopping this morning, and Warren sighed to himself, he would be the one to get hopped on.

He walked to the Institute and everywhere it was the same. Clusters, groups, pairs. They talked. The night workers forgot about going home to bed, and the day workers forgot about opening hours and time clocks. They were quiet, disorganized, content to air their grievances with one another right now. Later they would make up a delegation. And as each group would think it the only one with

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enough sense to do so, there would be quite a gathering of delegations, and together they would march on the government offices. Perhaps on the Institute itself for demonstrations. It could get rough.

They tried radio and television. They sent trucks through the streets blaring their answer to the charges being hurled at them from every corner. Three of their trucks were mobbed and returned with a new annoyance, a spokesman repeating over and over that they should vacate the building and let the people destroy it as it deserved.

Warren brought himself back to the present with a start and knew he had been asleep. His head was on his arm on the table and the whole arm tingled as the circulation slowly returned. He grinned at Amy and shrugged, "Sorry, honey. How long have I been out?"

"Just half an hour, darling. You're so tired, try to rest before you have to leave again." She was being cool now, acting as though he were leaving on one of his numerous trips. She indicated a small overnight case. "I got together some of the things you'll need. Not much. I thought you might not be able to take much."

He nodded and emptied his coffee cup down the sink. Down the drain, he thought, like every idea we've had so far. Down the drain. He turned to his wife once more and began to talk. They walked arm in arm to the living room and he talked as he sorted papers from the wall safe behind the desk. Most of them he stuffed into various pockets. The remainder burned in the fireplace.

"If only we could calm them down long enough to listen to us, we could prove that we're not killing them with radiation." Warren wondered briefly how many times the past week he had silently voiced that sentiment to himself. "But they won't even listen to us. They stormed the radio and television studios and tore up equipment until they can't even be repaired, even if the repairmen *had* the desire to fix them, which they don't. They ignore the President, and the soldiers, and the police. They know the soldiers won't fire on them. They're scared too. They're part of the figure."

"What figure?" Amy was sitting quietly by his side, letting him talk without interruption except for brief questions now and again.

"Seven out of ten. That's the figure the statisticians arrived at for the magic number believing that in one way or another atomic experiments are poisoning the atmosphere. Seven out of ten, including the army, excluding only avowed scientists. In a city of eight million that comes to about five and a half million against us." He grinned weakly at the thought of so many of them unwilling to believe the extensive campaign he had helped prepare for their benefit. The great

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American audience that fell for every new advertising gimmick that came along, not believing the simple truth.

Very quietly Amy asked, "And are they? Poisoning the atmosphere?" She didn't raise her eyes from her hands.

"Oh, for God's sake!" Warren stood up abruptly and started to pace the room angrily. "Do you think any scientist in his right mind would knowingly kill his own children?"

"You know I don't, Warren. But couldn't children be more immune to it than older people, or else get used to it?" She spread her hands helplessly, "I was thinking about what some of them were saying on the radio before it went off. That it was the middle-aged people who were getting it worst. That never had there been so much cancer causing deaths as in the past few years. And didn't my own mother die from it last year? She was only forty-eight. She shouldn't have died so soon." There were tears in her eyes that she tried to ignore, and failing, began to fumble for a handkerchief.

"Here, honey." Gently Warren held her until she was quiet again, then he said, "Look, Amy. You're doing what so many people are doing. You're blaming the death of a loved one on atomic research. Your mother had cancer, sure. But she also had a heart condition. She lived with it for the last twenty years of her life whereas a hundred years ago she could have lived one year at the most after the onset of it. You know that, but you're letting your emotions run away with you. That's the only major disease left that does kill anymore." He held her closer and knew that if he couldn't convince just one, the rest was hopeless.

After a short silence she pulled away from him, and turning, stared at him in wonder. "Darling, why don't you tell that to those mobs? I never thought of it that way. They can't destroy science now. Cancer might be the next to go on the list of past killers."

"Yeah, tell it to the people. We did, over and over Tuesday. And Wednesday, until they took over the radios. They won't listen. Five million people have gone insane all at once in New York. They have been scared for so long over the cold war and hot police actions, and the threat of being bombed, and of flying saucers, and of so many things that they are getting out of their systems now, that there is no way to reason with them. They want action. Not only here, but everywhere in the world. I heard that it's much worse in China. They have famine to protest on top of everything else. And Russia must be hell right now. Last report was that the whole country was on fire. They'll come to their senses, I suppose, but until then . . ." He closed his eyes and tried to remember what it had been like before all this. The memory

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was dim and unreal, not to be captured so readily.

He reported back to his chief in the morning with the assurance that his wife and children would be safe at least. The mob had tried to shoot down the helicopter twice, at take off, and again as it landed on the top of the Institute Building. Since that first tank incident, no more had been brought into town or they might have accomplished the purpose that the rifles and shotguns failed. A tank-happy captain had ordered his men to guard the courthouse. Within minutes the army had been disposed of and the tank was being run by a husky looking butcher still wearing his smeared apron, looking very apropos as he turned the monster toward the street where the Institute was. A helicopter pilot had put it out of commission quickly, but had later cracked into the Empire State Building. Accident, everyone said, and no one believed.

The chief had aged more than seemed possible during the week, Warren thought. He merely sat there waiting, blocked at every turn, unable to communicate with the people, unable to make a concrete suggestion for stopping the riots that had grown to civil war proportions during the past three days. Warren quit his surreptitious study of his boss, and continued gathering what material would go with them. He went through the confidential files methodically, his face set in hard lines of protest. He felt drained inside now after a wild outburst against the action that was being taken.

"Leaving! We can't! You know what they'll do to the building and equipment!"

"Let's face it, Warren. We reached the decision last night while you were gone. Unanimously. We'll take the most important files, all the micro tape, and some of the smaller lab stuff. Period." The chief held Warren's gaze steadily until it fell. Then he sighed deeply, "Sorry, Warren. You're an idealist in a world of realists. They don't mix. That mob isn't going to settle for any more promises, and the President's message said explicitly that there was to be no open warfare over a building. Any building."

"Maybe they're right!" Warren shouted. "All you really care about is science after all. They're entitled to their opinion, and if we're menacing them in any way, they have a right to revolt. Man's first loyalty is to man, not to any government. *Don't* you see, Chief?" he pleaded, "there has to be a way to get through to them. They have to be convinced that we are right." He watched the stony expression on his superior's face for a long moment, then shouted, "Why don't you admit that you can't handle it anymore and let someone else try?"

"Who, for God's sake, who?" The chief threw up his hands helplessly. "How many days have we

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sat here trying one way after another? For what? Do you have the answer?" When Warren remained silent, he said heavily, "You're in charge of sorting the confidential files. Later we'll have a weinie roast with the extra stuff."

Several times Warren looked up and started to speak, but he didn't. The chief was suffering inwardly with a calmness that meant a storm was imminent, and he didn't want to precipitate it.

Someone brought him coffee and handed him a lighted cigarette. They didn't talk about it. The man's eyes were red and swollen, and Warren turned away in embarrassment. He had been crying. Weeping over a lifetime of work being destroyed. He knew there would be no recapturing of most of it. Warren grunted his thanks and resumed his rapid sorting.

All the unfinished ideas and dreams of men too busy at present to finish them. How did one say which was important and which not? Warren had accepted without question his task. He was the impartial one, the one with knowledge of each department, its progress and aims and importance. He made the decisions about what was to be publicized, and how much of it, and what was to remain secret until an enemy struck, if ever. The chief was the grand overseer of all the facets of publicity, naturally, but he was more of an advertising man, less a scientist than Warren. Now he sat behind his useless desk, with its useless telephones, and stared into a past world that was withering and decaying even as he watched.

A super antibiotic, never produced, but kept in the files in case the supply of raw materials for the presently used stuff ran short. It would go. A formula to be perfected for an anti-gravity metal. Too fanciful, incomplete. It went into the growing pile for the fire. A newly discovered virus that produced instant undetectable death. Warren pondered it for an instant, and discarded it. There were enough ways to cause death without breeding viruses to do the job. He finished that file, and started the next one.

No need to take much time here, he told himself. This was completed work, most of it successfully. He leafed through the folders quickly. The Institute tested ideas from all over the world, had a complete staff of research scientists of its own working on independent ideas, and now and again let an outsider use its equipment. Each experiment was written up, with an impressive number of copies and filed.

Warren grinned suddenly at the folder he was holding. That little Japanese fellow. He had bustled about the corridors for six months never finding his own borrowed lab without help. He had constantly lost his interpreter, and was forever on the verge of being firmly but courteously ushered from the building. Warren glanced inside

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the folder wondering briefly whether or not the little guy had made it. Then his wandering eye became fixed and he rapidly read through the report. Nervously he lit a cigarette, and tucking the folder under his arm began to pace the office. It might work. It would be hard to get everything together in so short a time, but it might work.

He had forgotten his chief, still behind the desk, until he asked in a deceptively mild tone, "Finished already, Warren?"

"Huh? Chief, I think I might have found a way after all." Warren tossed the folder to the desk, "Are you familiar with this?"

"No. Who is this San Yietnam?" He flicked the pages of the report impatiently.

"We called him Satchmo." Warren had scooped up the building phone, and getting no answer, raced to the door. "I'm going to find Elkins. He'll know if it will work."

All night a whole bevy of scientists worked, ignoring their tiredness, shoving aside anyone who chanced to get in their way, grunting unintelligible replies to queries on their progress. Warren shunted back and forth from the lab where he was treated as an intruder, to the radio room where the operator was sending the same coded message all over the world.

"Is he getting through, Chief?" Warren asked, trying to feel less useless.

"So far, so good. Other points are relaying the formula also by now. Did Elkins say it would do it?" At Warren's shrug he drew him to the tightly curtained and shaded windows. "It better. Look."

Cannons! Tanks! Warren's stomach registered the fact in a shivering tightening up action before his mind became aware of the meaning of them. Abruptly he said, "I'll get the files and anything else salvageable to the basement just in case."

They crouched behind the barrier as another shell thudded dully above them and the vibrating message came through the thick concrete walls.

"Another part of the wall," one of them said soberly. "Why don't they just set the place on fire now?"

"They want it in a pile of sand and rocks," another said. He accompanied his remark with a dry cough. "God, I'm thirsty."

Warren fought the desire for water that they were all feeling, and wished for the millionth time that they had managed to save some. Who could have known that the mob would start their bombardment so soon? The army must have joined them wholeheartedly. He wondered again why there were no planes. No bombs. He sucked deeply on the cigarette he was smoking in spite of the knowledge that it would only make his mouth drier.

He watched gloomily as Stevens, the short-wave operator crept over to him, carefully avoiding the men

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stretched out sleeping on the basement floor. "Anything yet?" He knew from the other's expression that there wasn't, but he always asked.

"Nothing. Moscow's as dead as a doornail, and I'm getting London less and less. They are getting bombs as well as cannons there. No let up yet." Stevens looked at him beseechingly, "Warren, did Elkins say it would work?"

They asked over and over. "He said it might." Elkins had gone with the first direct shell hit. He had mixed the stuff, had made the substitution personally at any rate, and had sent it out with two men who looked like tramps, but weren't. He had told them to let him know. They hadn't come back. Three days, he had said. This was the fourth. But there had been a slight change, a necessary one, for all the ingredients weren't on hand. Warren waited for the next question Stevens would ask. They all did. He had been with Elkins at the end. They thought since it had been his find, and since he had been with Elkins that he ought to know. He waited.

"Warren," hesitantly, afraid of getting the wrong answer, "did Dr. Elkins say that the other stuff he put in it would make it weaker or anything?"

Elkins hadn't said. It would have to do, he'd said. And we'll pray, he'd said. But the men hadn't come back, and maybe hadn't got there, or hadn't been able to use it after they got there. There were too many maybes. He looked at Stevens' taut face, and remembered that he was the only one who could get the damaged radio to work. He said, "He said it might make it take a little longer to take effect, but no other change."

Stevens left, and Warren lapsed into a semi-sleep. In another few hours it wouldn't matter any longer anyway. The floor above them would soon collapse and they would all be buried under the tons of rubble that had once been the proud and beautiful Science Institute Building. Buried in their work. That struck him as funny, and he smiled to himself, as he dozed. The silence awakened him. He had gone to sleep amid the noise of shelling and rifle fire and falling stone and brickwork, and he awoke to silence.

Cautiously he raised his head. One or two of the others were doing the same. They nudged each other until all of them were awake.

"They've stopped."

"Could be a trap to see if we're still alive."

"Might be out of shells."

They could hear the tick, tick, ticking of Stevens' radio set, and as one they waited, afraid to hope, not daring not to hope.

"London is quiet now!" Stevens let out a whoop then, and continued hysterically, "And so is Russia, and France. They have quit!"

Cautiously they crept up the

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steps. It took them several hours to dig out of the ruins all about, but they worked in silence, unhampered by anyone, unchallenged.

Much of the mob had dispersed. Some were still there, but they were talking in subdued tones, with no trace of the hysteria they had shown for nearly two weeks. Their faces bore signs of shame, of bewilderment at the horrible damage they had done. A very few still looked belligerent, but they were being left alone, haranguing empty air. At the sight of the scientists leaving their building, those still in the street began to melt away, hiding in the shadows.

One of the men wound unobstrusively to Warren's side. It was one of the "tramps" who had gone into the street carrying an enormous bottle. "Say, what was in that stuff?" he asked, flashing a grin.

Warren told him. "Tranquilizer. That Japanese doctor perfected a formula that could be introduced into the water supply of a prison to calm down inmates during or even before a riot began. The stuff is tasteless, but extremely potent, 85 to 90 percent effective almost instantly."

The secret service man laughed, "I'll say. It's been working on them for over a day now. Each time the water supply got passed around some more decided to go home."

"You didn't . . . ?" Warren looked at the amiable face in dismay.

"Nope. The doc warned me not to drink it." He pulled a flask from his pocket and handed it to Warren.

Warren drank thirstily. He handed it back regretfully. They had too much to do still. The people had to be convinced that there would be no more bomb tests anywhere. They couldn't afford to have any. Not after this. No more bombs, no more war. It was inevitable.

The people were going to do more of the driving, less of the sightseeing from now on. And one of the first things they would get done would be to provide more foolproof safeguards for their water systems and laws governing the use of tranquilizers. The drug would wear off when the water supply was gone, leaving them feeling ill and exhausted and probably bitter about the use of it on them. But the pressure would be off for a time, and unless they were given good reason for letting it get too much again, they shouldn't have the need to erupt like that again.

He heard his name being called and turned to find his chief issuing instructions at a rapid clip. The boss was back at the helm now in a field that was familiar to him. Selling the public on a sound idea. Warren turned once more to the secret service man who, obligingly, held out the Scotch. One for the road, Warren thought, and then back to work.

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the new tom swift

by . . . Andrew E. Svenson

The story behind the Tom Swift series—who really wrote the books — and their importance today.

"TOM, that runaway planet, or whatever it is, will—will it collide with Earth?" White-faced with fear, Bud Barclay stared at his friend Tom Swift.

"If it keeps on course," Tom replied grimly, "and maintains the same speed, I don't see how it can miss us!"

Those of you who read the old Tom Swift series (1910-1939) will recognize the urgency of another tense Tom Swift situation. Only this is not the old hero speaking, but his son, Tom., Jr., born to that intrepid inventor and his girl friend, Mary Nestor, whom Tom married in the book titled IN HIS HOUSE ON WHEELS.

Confusing? Perhaps. Let's trace the genealogy step by step. Back in 1910 Edward Stratemeyer, using the pseudonym Victor Appleton, launched Tom Swift in a pseudo-scientific series which became known to millions of young Americans. The cast of characters included Ned Newton who was Tom's buddy; Eradicate Simpson, Tom's faithful servant; Koku, the giant, and Professor Damon ("Bless my shoe buttons, Tom, I think your aeroplane will fly!")

Tom Swift was a name to conjure with when we were young. When we ran into Andrew E. Svenson, editor, Stratemeyer Syndicate, at a recent Mystery Writers of America dinner, it struck us that some of you might be interested in the story of this famous series, now being continued by Victor Appleton II.

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Who can forget Tom Swift and his electric runabout, his electric rifle, his wizard camera, his photo telephone? In all, fourteen million copies were sold by Grosset & Dunlap. What with swapping and trading, the publishers figure that fifty million boys thrilled to each of Tom's adventures.

Then in the late 1930's several things happened! Tom married Mary. The kiss at the altar was a kiss of death to the series. Tom and Mary immediately became grown-ups like Mom and Dad. Shucks, who wants to read about married people? In addition, war clouds over Europe sped technology to a point where it began to surpass even the wildest scientific ideas of Tom Swift. Then came the paper shortage and publication ceased. Tom Swift was gone but not forgotten.

At least so thought Harriet S. Adams, now head of the Stratemeyer Syndicate, East Orange, New Jersey, owner of the Tom Swift property. Her father was Edward Stratemeyer. Following his death in 1930, Mrs. Adams carried on the family literary tradition. Why, she thought, couldn't the same idea be projected in the Tom Swift family? Besides, Mrs. Adams reasoned, the bright new world of space travel lay ahead, a fertile field for science fiction.

Accordingly, Mrs. Adams provided Mary Nestor not only with one, but two children—Tom Swift, Jr., now eighteen years old, and his sister, Sandra, seventeen. After this fictional "Planned Parenthood" she persuaded Grosset and Dunlap to launch the new series in 1954. It includes not only *old* Tom, now middle-aged, and Ned Newton, an executive in Swift Enterprises, but also Bud Barclay, young Tim's sidekick; lovely young Phyllis Newton, Ned's daughter; and a Texas buckaroo named Chow Winkler, bald and portly, who serves as Tom's personal chef.

"I figured the name Tom Swift was money in the bank," Mrs. Adams remarked, and so it has proved to be. The new Tom Swift series, already nearing the one million mark, has the following titles to thrill boys and girls alike across the length and breadth of the land: HIS FLYING LAB, HIS JETMARINE, HIS ROCKET SHIP, HIS GIANT ROBOT, HIS ATOMIC EARTH BLASTER, HIS OUTPOST IN SPACE, HIS DIVING SEACOPTER, IN THE CAVES OF NUCLEAR FIRE, ON THE PHANTOM SATELLITE, HIS ULTRASONIC CYCLOPLANE, HIS DEEP-SEA HYDRODROME, IN THE RACE TO THE MOON.

But there is one notable difference between the old and the new series. There is nothing "pseudo" in the scientific achievements of Tom, Jr. To assure today's smart youngsters of authentic reading material, the Stratemeyer Syndicate engages top scientists as consultants.

Tom and his space-traveling crew always best their adversaries, but there is one threat forever lurking—our country's greatest rival across the

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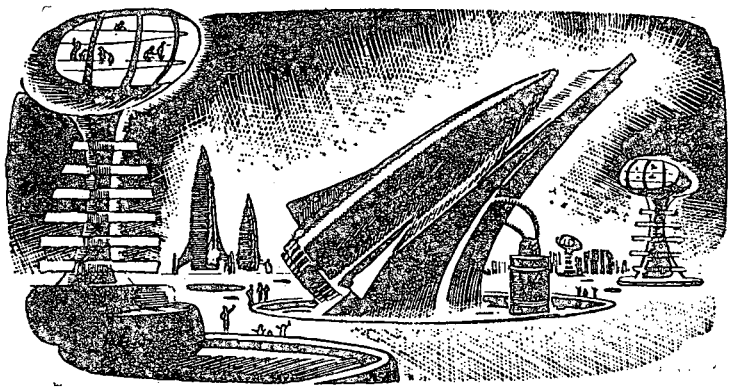
water. Tom has beat their science boys to the punch by coming out first with an atomic airplane. He even has orbited the earth in a rocket at 1,075 miles up.

Should he try for the moon? The question came up at an editorial conference last year. The vote was yes. He must do this before those other fellows do. So Tom went to the moon and back in the book titled IN THE RACE TO THE MOON.

It seems that Lunick's current flight to the sun has jolted Tom and his staff, but our young hero has something up his sleeve. Perhaps a flight to Mars or Venus!

Author of the new series is Victor Appleton, II. If you should ask Mrs. Adams to identify him, she will tell you that's a secret of Swift Enterprises!



VENUS ORBIT SEEN NEXT U. S. SPACE AIM

An attempt to put a satellite in orbit around Venus will be made by this country, some weeks after you read this, according to a report published in England. The space vehicle, developed by our National Aeronautics and Space Administration, will be based on an Atlas Intercontinental Ballistic Missile, with second and third stages adapted from the Vanguard rocket, used in our first earth-satellite attempts.

Venus, one tenth smaller than the earth, circles the sun on an orbit inside that of the earth but on about the same plane. It is our nearest neighbor, after the moon, and comes at times as close as twenty-five million miles. It's important to remember, though, warns one English astronomer, that this is a relative distance, and while we know it accurately, we do not know the *actual* distances in miles. . . .

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leisure class

by . . . Robert Silverberg

Three hours of work and forty hours' pay. And a fifty-year term. This was a magnificent contract!

compremate (com' pre mat), v., obs., coined 1977 from "comprehensive automation." To adapt an industrial entity to complete automated functioning. No longer in common use.

"I SAW it coming all along," Leroy Mellin said, that day in 1977 when his factory finally converted to the three-hour work week. "It's a good thing we've got a strong Union behind us, by golly! We may be working just half an hour in the morning and six minutes at night, but we've got a *contract!*"

Mellin was a steel-worker. His father before him had been a steel-worker, and his father before him. But neither his father nor his father's father had been automated. They had worked beneath the raw blast of the giant converters, felt the throbbing energy and the blazing heat at close range.

"Tell us about your new job," Mellin's wife prompted. She was a pale, thin woman of about thirty who had never held a job herself but who was thoroughly familiar with the problems of an automated industry.

Mellin chuckled. "I get there in

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the morning, see. I push Button Number Three-thirteen. Remember that, in case I ever forget it. Three-thirteen. It's got red enamel on it. I push the button at nine o'clock sharp. Then I stay there until 9:30 and wait for trouble."

"Trouble?"

"There's a Trouble Button too," he said. "It has a red light over it. If the red light ever flashes, I push the Trouble Button. Then I go home. If the red light doesn't flash by 9:30, it isn't going to flash at all. This begins on Monday."

Lora, his youngest daughter, giggled brightly. "Daddy's going to be home all day! Daddy's going to be home all day!"

"Not quite all day," Mellin said. He rumpled her chocolate-brown hair fondly. "I go back to the plant at 4:54. I wait till 5 o'clock. Then I push Button Number Three-fourteen, which is right next to Button Number Three-thirteen, and I go home."

"Why do you wait six minutes?" his wife asked. "Why don't you just show up at 5 o'clock sharp and push the button?"

"The Union!" Mellin exclaimed proudly. "They demanded a three-hour work week, just to keep things even. Half an hour a day in the morning, that's two and a half hours a week, and six minutes a day in the evening, that makes three hours altogether. For which I get the same wage my Dad got for a forty-hour week, and three times the money Granddad got for sixty hours beneath the blast furnace!"

"That's wonderful—I guess," Mrs. Mellin said dubiously.

"You *guess?* Of course it's wonderful! Three hours of work, and forty hours' pay—woman, that's the best contract ever signed. And it's a fifty-year term, too. That means they can't ever throw me out of a job. We were worried about that, too. Only last month, when the factory announced it was converting to auto—automation, I talked about it with Jerry Barra—he's the shop steward, y'know."

"I know Jerry," Mrs. Mellin said softly.

"Well, I was worried, though of course I didn't let on anything at home. I asked him, 'Jerry,' I asked him, 'when they get around to putting these robot machines in here, are they going to need *us* any more?' And Jerry grinned at me and said, 'Leroy-boy,' he said, 'someone's gotta push the buttons that starts those machines off. And that's going to be you and me and all the other boys that work here now.' And I said to him, 'But Jerry,' I said, 'why in blazes don't they just make a machine to push the blazing buttons?'—"

"I was wondering that myself," said Mrs. Mellin.

"And he grinned from here to here and said, 'Leroy-boy, they *could* make such a machine—but we've got a powerful Union, Leroy-boy. No blasted robot's going to get *your* job,' he told me. And no robot will."

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"I wasn't worried too much about that," said Mrs. Mellin. "I know it's a good Union, and they won't let you lose your job. But you used to work thirty hours a week. Now it's only three. What are you going to do with all that extra time?"

Mellin grinned happily. "Fix up around the house a little bit, and maybe fish. Yes. Fish. I'll *fish!* This is the new leisure, girl! We've never had it so good."

The foremen of the steel plant that employed Leroy Mellin had never had it so good, either.

Each section head now was responsible for seeing that each man in his group pushed his button promptly at 9 A.M., and that he returned at 4:54 to shut down his part of the operation. In order to do this properly, it was necessary for each foreman to be on hand at 8:45 each morning. He made the rounds, finding out if there were any absentees, and at 9 A.M. sharp he gave the signal for the button-pushing. He was then free to leave; his time was his own until 4:45.

The company doctor had never had it so good, either.

He remained on duty until 9:45 each morning, by which time the plant was clear of all human beings and the robots were at work manufacturing steel. Since the tireless machines had no need of his services, the doctor left also, not to return until shut-down time. But since none of the men had anything more dangerous to do than pushing buttons, a coat of dust gradually accreted on the doctor's once-indispensable first-aid kit.

Management had never had it so good, either.

The plant required no supervision, and the troublesome human equation never figured in production schematics any longer. The cryotronic mind of the Plant Computer relieved them of much of the planning chores; the Computer handled the influx of ore, governed the output, banked the checks, regulated the machinery. Busy, efficient repair-robots took care of any break in the smooth functioning of the plant. The only task remaining for the company executives was to siphon off the profit at occasional intervals.

The concessionaire who operated the plant cafeteria had never had it so good, either.

Since no one ate in the cafeteria any more, he was technically out of a job—but the terms of the automation settlement allowed him a pension equivalent to his previous earnings, and so he was scarcely unhappy about the change-over.

It was a busy, happy time. All over America, the new machines were taking firm foothold—and millions of erstwhile wageslaves were exposed to leisure for the first time.

It was a disastrous summer for fish, that year. The inhabitants of America's lakes had never seen so many fishhooks all at once.

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The first sign of a change in Leroy Mellin came two weeks after his plant had undergone Comprehensive Automation — Compremation, it was called.

As usual, his wife had left his block and tackle in the hall that morning, next to his fishing creel and other angling paraphernalia.

She was busy in the kitchen, tidying up the breakfast things—the home, unfortunately, had not yet been fully automated—when the announceodoor said, "Mr. Mellin has come home."

The kitchen clock said 9:45. His day's work was done, except for shut-off time. "Have a good day at the lake, dear!" she called cheerily. She waited for him to gather up his fishing gear and depart again.

But to her surprise the kitchen door opened and her husband came in.

"Did I forget to put your creel out, dear? I'm sorry: I was so busy this morning—"

"The creel was there," Mellin said. "I'm not going fishing today."

"Not going—why?"

He slumped down soggily on a kitchen chair. "There must have been millions out at the lake yesterday. We were fishing elbow to elbow. It's too damned crowded!"

"You said that yesterday, dear. But you said you and Marty Brian and Dave Branneman might go up to that other lake—what was its name?"

Mellin shook his head dolefully. "No. We're not going to any other lake. I'm tired of fishing. That's all. Tired of sitting on a wet plank in a rowboat and dangling a piece of string in the lake. It's *silly*, that's what it is."

"You're just depressed this morning," his wife ventured. "Why don't you take a nap? Maybe you'll feel more like—"

"No! Dammit, I've done nothing but fish for two weeks. I'm tired of it!"

Leroy Mellin was not the only one—nor was it confined to industry alone.

Allis Oliver had been an engineer. He had been one of the mighty fountainheads of the Compremation movement, designing machines to carry out complex operations, machines to supervise those machines, machines to repair both other kinds of machines, and machines to repair the repair-machines. He also, one day, designed a machine whose function it was to design machines.

That had been a mistake.

Within six months the engineering firm that employed him had itself gone over to Compremation. A brisk, efficient team of gleaming usuform robots now occupied the drafting desks.

Allis Oliver and his fellow engineers continued to draw full pay, plus bonuses. But they were not happy.

Moira Keogh had been a librarian. She loved books: loved to be

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around them, loved to assort and arrange them, loved to dust them, to feel their smooth pages. She loved to read them, also, though she had little time for that.

Her library shifted to Compremation in a move toward greater efficiency in serving the compremated new leisure class. Miss Keogh was introduced, one day, to a sleek, squat little metal cabinet which hummed pleasantly and knew the Dewey Decimal System of classification thoroughly. Robots on noiseless treads now restored books to the shelves, operated the indexing system, and otherwise relieved Miss Keogh of the tiresome routine work she had done so long.

Since the library—by virtue of the Compremation Act of 1977, which provided for such things—continued to employ her, in a supervisory capacity, she remained on the premises. Inasmuch as she had no actual duties, she spent her days in an upstairs nook, reading. For the first time in her life, she could read the books she always had meant to read, when she had time.

She read *Henry Esmond* and *Remembrance of Things Past,* the unabridged Toynbee and the unexpurgated *Decameron.* She read all of Chekhov and most of Strindberg. She read Schiller and Lessing, Aeschylus and Horace. She was two-thirds of the way through Gibbon when it occurred to her that all this reading was something of a bore.

Her hands let the book drop thumpingly to the floor. A shimmering chrome-jacketed robot glided up, dusted the book off, and restored it to the shelves.

Miss Keogh watched numbly.

How can it be? she wondered. *Am I tired of reading? Impossible!*

But, as she yawned over *Hadrian the Seventh* later, she saw that it was quite possible after all. Like twenty million book-loving Americans who had done little but reading since the Compremation Revolution, she had literary indigestion.

There were others, too.

Bernard Cowan was a bookkeeper whose secret joy was philately. He had been delighted when the electronic brains installed in his office left him free to spend his time at home, arranging, classifying, filing. He detected watermarks endlessly, measured perforations, and gleefully settled down to his collecting specialty, the United States issue of 1912-21.

It took him just three weeks to discover that eight hours a day of peering at tiny colored representations of George Washington and Ben Franklin could be infinitely less interesting than bookkeeping.

Four million coal miners were compremated in a single week. Eight million auto-workers. Seven million steel-workers. Thirteen million clericals.

Typesetters. Streetcleaners.

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It spread.

A leisure class of a hundred ninety million inhabited America. 1977 was the year of emancipation, said the magazines and video programs. A new economic synthesis has been reached, said the sages.

The culture of ancient Athens had been a pinnacle of intellectual achievement of the past—despite, or more accurately because of, the fact that it had been founded on a slave economy.

Compremation offered America a chance to regain the rarified intellectual level of Plato's Greece. Now, argued the savants, the perfect slave has been created. No nasty ethico-moral considerations were involved in compremated machine labor. Man was free—free to think, to dream, to pursue hobbies and creative activities.

Despite this, there were those who were unhappy.

Miss Moira Keogh, deprived of the pleasures of reading, grew lean and haggard, and spent her days broodingly staring at the library-robots. For a while, that passed the time for her; then even that palled.

Allis Oliver would watch the clicking designing-robots sitting at his desk, and, twiddling his thumbs, would think dark thoughts of Frankenstein and his monster.

Benjamin Cowan, discovering that stamp-collecting was at best a hollow enterprise, turned to something more profound—numismatics. But coins were beyond the reach of his budget, and he found in time that the hobby was no more interesting than stamp-collecting. He envied the sleek computer now handling his books.

Mrs. Leroy Mellin, who, being a housewife, had not experienced the emancipation of compremation except second-hand, through her husband, took valuable time from her household chores to complain to her neighbor. Something had to be done. Her husband was becoming impossibly irritable.

"It's this free time he has. He used to come home dead tired, and we'd sit around and watch TV and relax. Now he relaxes all the time. He doesn't know what to *do* with himself. It's driving him crazy!"

Mrs. David Branneman nodded sympathetically. "It's the same with Dave. He used to bowl every Wednesday. Then when compremation came along he went bowling every day, and now he doesn't bowl at all. Says it bores him. He just sits around and grouses!"

"Something's gotta be done," Mrs. Mellin declared.

"There's a drug, I hear," said Mrs. Branneman. "They sell it now. You take it and you go right to sleep for six hours or whatever, and you wake up as if no time passed at all."

Mrs. Mellin shook her head. "I don't like that. I don't want Leroy taking drugs. But I don't know what we'll do!"

There really *was* only one thing to do, and the workers of America

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arrived at the solution almost simultaneously. The General Strike began in the autumn of 1977. It sprang up almost of its own accord, first in one plant, then in another. In Leroy Mellin's plant, the idea occurred to at least ten men at the same time. They refused to push the buttons.

Mellin stared at the glossy redness of Button Number Three-Thirteen and obstinately refused to push. At his side, Dave Branneman refrained from touching *his* button. Down the row they sat, gazing calmly at the enamelled buttons that controlled the plant.

The foreman came along, roaring in frenzy.

"What's a matter you guys? Push them buttons! You want the schedule to get fouled up?"

The men sat still. The harried foreman dashed down the row, shouting. It was 9:02, and the robots were not moving. He acted automatically; he pushed all the buttons within reach. Slowly, the factory came to life.

But that afternoon the Union registered formal protest with management. The foreman had no right to push buttons. It was not his job.

The strike was on.

It took a little while for the arbitrating computers to figure out just who was striking, why, and for what—but, when they did, a solution was simple. The existing contracts were torn up by common consent. New contracts were negotiated.

The machines were removed, the old machinery re-installed. American life returned to normal—to a good life, to a clean life, to a life unencumbered by leisure.

A grateful America hailed the return of the sixty-hour work week, calling it a great humanitarian reform.

FIRST MAN IN SPACE

THE FIRST attempt to orbit a man in a satellite is slated for late 1960. The National Space and Aeronautics Administration will, soon, begin to consider the qualifications of 110 applicants from the armed services who wish to be the first man to be sent into space in a recoverable satellite.

The 12 who are finally chosen will be given Civil Service status, paid $12,000 a year on a three year contract with Project Mercury, and stationed at the NSAA laboratory at Langley Field, Virginia.

Incidentally, Dr. T. F. Walkowicz, an aeronautical engineer, pointed out, at a recent American Rocket Society meeting, that incentives for exploration had certainly lessened since the days of Columbus. . . The modern space explorer would have little to look forward to beyond a ticker-tape parade. If that.

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the trouble with sten

by . . . Gil Shipman

For the first time in days he felt a lessening of the tension that had been building up in him. Wonderful!

"RING—Walk In."

Sten had to make a special effort to reach out and prod the ivory disk beneath the words. Chimes sounded within. He seized the brass knob and opened the heavy door. Inside was a foyer, on the left, a closed door. (That must be where, Sten thought.) A folding screen divided the foyer to make a small waiting room of the far end. As he passed by the door, Sten could hear the faint sounds of a voice. He sat down behind the screen, wondering how long he would have to wait.

It was not long. He heard the door open, and, a moment later, the sound of the front door closing. Footsteps, muffled by the carpeting approached him, and there was the Doctor. He stood in the opening between the screen and the foyer wall and looked at Sten from behind his horn-rimmed spectacles.

"Mr. Sten?" he asked. "Won't you come this way, please?"

Sten followed the Doctor into the other room. The Doctor sat down in a leather easy chair, crossed his legs, plucked a fountain pen from his breast pocket and reached down beside his chair for a sheet of paper and a file folder. He looked up at

Gil Shipman's knowledge of the consulting room is obviously quite intimate, but he assures us that Sten's shoes would fit him much better than the doctor's — and that previous incarnations include railroad fireman, Air Force pilot, magazine editor, newspaperman, etc. etc.

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Sten, who stood hesitantly between a chair and the inevitable couch, and smiled.

"Please sit down, Mr. Sten. That's it. Make yourself comfortable. Fine. Now, let's get rid of the paperwork: name, occupation, all that sort of thing."

"Well, I . . ." Sten began and stopped.

The Doctor smiled reassuringly. "Let's begin at the beginning, shall we? Could I have your full name and serial number, please?"

"Why, I—it's just Sten, sir," he stammered.

"Fine, fine," the Doctor said. He looked delighted. He seemed tremendously pleased at what Sten had managed to say. "And now, perhaps, the number?"

"Yes, sir," Sten said promptly. "It's S-10-46589, sir."

"Good!" said the Doctor heartily, writing the information down on the folder and again at the top of the sheet of paper. "Address?"

"Care of Lubricoid, Incorporated, sir. Four sixty-eight Cobal, zone eighty-eight, sir."

"Mmmm-hmm. Occupation?"

"I am special assistant to G. Wade Hopkins, President of Lubricoid, Incorporated, sir," Sten said.

The Doctor looked immensely pleased, Sten thought happily. For the first time in days Sten felt a perceptible lessening of the high tension which had been building up within him. "Now, Sten, you just try to be as relaxed as possible. This is always a little difficult at first, but I'm sure you'll find it easier as we go along."

"Yes, Doctor," said Sten.

"Fine. That's excellent. I can see that you're going to be one of those patients it's a real pleasure to work with," the Doctor beamed. "Now, just what is the trouble, Sten? Can you tell me?"

"It's—well, my work, Doctor," Sten said anxiously. "I keep getting confused. I can't concentrate. My attention keeps wandering to, er, irrelevant subjects. It's just awful, sir. My efficiency has dropped way down. If it were anybody but Mr. Hopkins, I'm sure some drastic action would have been taken before this."

"Yes, I know," the Doctor said. He took a pipe from the table beside his chair and began to fill it. His steady gaze held Sten's attention like a magnet. "That's often the way it is. Naturally Mr. Hopkins would be concerned about it. Does it trouble you so much, Sten? What do you think about Mr. Hopkins?"

"He's wonderful, sir, just wonderful!" said Sten enthusiastically. "It's marvelous just to watch the way he works. So precise! So meticulous! So accurate! His orders are so clear, so succ—"

"Oh, I have no doubt of it, Sten," the Doctor said. He had filled his pipe, Sten noticed.

"Allow me, sir, to give you a light," Sten said.

"It's kind of you," the Doctor said, "but I have a match, thanks.

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About Mr. Hopkins: I'm sure he is wonderful in many ways, Sten, but don't you think it might be something about him that's causing these difficulties? Now, remember that everything we say here together is strictly confidential, just between you and me. Think about it carefully and tell me if you can recall some particular reaction you have to Mr. Hopkins, for instance at these times when you get confused."

Sten was shocked at the suggestion, but the Doctor had asked him to think about it carefully. He paused, running the question through his memory. The more he thought about it, the more unlikely it seemed.

"I don't think so, sir, honestly. There's nothing like that in—Mr. Hopkins is absolutely the most wonderful man I've ever met, Doctor. You really should—"

"All right, Sten," the Doctor interrupted. "That's fine. I'm sure you must be right. Let's look at it from another point of view, shall we? Suppose you tell me"—he glanced quickly at his notes—"about these periods of confusion, irrelevant thoughts. When does this happen?"

"It's mostly during working hours, Doctor."

"Mmmm-hmm. All right. Now, about these irrelevant thoughts. Tell me about them, would you please?"

"You mean tell you what they *are*, sir?" The idea jolted him.

"I know it's embarrassing at first, Sten, but that's what we're here for, aren't we, now? Yes, of course. Now, you go right ahead, and no doubt we'll soon get to the bottom of this little difficulty of yours."

Sten felt he must be glowing with shame. The Doctor's eyes remained fixed steadily on him. He fought an impulse to rush out of the room. After all, he reminded himself, that *was* why he was here. He played the Doctor's words back in his mind to steady himself. He gripped the chair arms and, with an effort, began to search through his memory.

"Well, it's—I . . ." He floundered into an awkward silence. The Doctor sat there expectantly. His face wore an expression of kindly interest. From the street outside noises filtered through into the quiet room. As he recalled those utterly outrageous thoughts, Sten felt as though he were about to explode. Fantastic that he, Sten, should think such things! No wonder Mr. Hopkins— Never mind Mr. Hopkins now, he said to himself sternly. That's not what you're here for, remember. The mounting tension became almost unbearable. He wished the Doctor would say something, anything.

"Take your time, Sten," the Doctor said encouragingly. "You may have to search a bit through your memory for them."

"Oh, I've got them, all right, Doctor," Sten said. "They might as well be burned into my memory! But really! It's so utterly fantastic!"

"Not as bad as that, I'm sure," the Doctor said imperturbably. "Hunger pangs? Tendency to

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sleepiness, perhaps? Something of that sort?"

"Oh, worse, Doctor, much worse!" Sten almost sobbed. He wished he were the type that could cry. It would do him good right now. At least it would relieve some of the intolerable pressure, but there was only one way: "All right, sir, I'll tell you. *They are thoughts about women!*"

To Sten's astonishment, the Doctor did not look in the least shocked. He puffed placidly on his pipe. "Try to remember just the circumstances in which these thoughts occur," he said genially.

Sten felt his face must be almost aflame: "It's when this Katy—"

"Yes? Go on, Sten . . ."

"Mr. Hopkins' secretary, sir," Sten continued agitatedly. It was out now, and he was determined to go on, as the Doctor had said: "And—well, I know this is highly irregular, sir, but when Mr. Hopkins buzzes for me, we, that is, I—Oh, dear, I'm afraid I am being quite incoherent. What I mean is, Doctor, Mr. Hopkins' office and mine share a common anteroom, so that, to go into his office when summoned, I am abliged to pass through the anteroom where Katy works. I don't mean there's anything unusual about that. It's what happens then. It's all I can do to go by her, Doctor, believe me. When I come near her, I begin having all these, er, thoughts I mentioned."

"I see," the Doctor said. He relit his pipe. "Well, now, Sten, this situation is perhaps not as unusual as you think. You'd be surprised at the number of such cases I've treated."

"Yes, Doctor," said Sten.

"Would you describe this Katy for me, please? More or less the usual secretarial type, is she?"

"No, indeed!" Sten said emphatically. "I remember when she came. You've got to hand it to Mr. Hopkins: 'None of your office automatons for me,' he said. 'A secretary should brighten up the office a bit. She should look and act like a woman, not a machine.' Yes, sir, that's the way Mr. Hopkins wanted it," Sten reminisced happily, "and that's the way it was. You have to give him credit!"

"She filled the bill, did she?"

"I should say *so,* Doctor," Sten agreed. "To every specification. Hair, complexion, er, contours, eyes—Oh, dear! The eyes!"

"What about them, Sten?"

"I guess you'll find this hard to believe, Doctor," Sten said. His voice was almost pleading. "They glow, honestly they do. When I look into them I can see a violent flame pulsating deep inside of them. Oh, Doctor! I know it sounds incredible."

Once again the Doctor betrayed no disbelief. Instead he smiled in a friendly way.

"Not at all, Sten," he said amiably. "It's not at all incredible. Now, is there anything else about this, ah, Katy, anything at all?"

"Oh, yes, Doctor. When I come

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into her room, or when she comes into mine, I begin to feel warm, then hot. I can't control it at all. Once she followed me right into Mr. Hopkins' office on some obviously concocted errand. She does this sort of thing all the time, Doctor. She seems to go out of her way to be near me. Sometimes I think she's —well, pursuing me! Anyway, on this occasion she went so far as to lean right across me, ostensibly to retrieve some papers from Mr. Hopkins' desk, and she touched me. Doctor, it was just as though an electric shock had gone through me."

"And did you have this sensation of, ah, heat at this time?"

"That's putting it mildly."

"I see. Tell me, Sten: what did you do when she touched you?"

"I broke away from the contact, naturally."

"Naturally," said the Doctor.

"And I keep thinking of her even at work in my own room," Sten rushed on. He was greatly relieved now that he had at last blurted it out—so much so that he could not stop, even though he heard the chimes in the foyer and the sound of the front door opening. "I think of her superb hair—it's dyed, I suppose, but no matter—and her complexion, though I assume it's really a masterpiece of art, and, well, uh, her figure, and that sort of thing."

"Fine, fine," the Doctor said. He glanced at his watch and closed the folder on his lap. "All right, Sten, that's just fine. I'm afraid our time is up now."

"Doctor," said Sten anxiously, "you *can* do something for me? Mr. Hop—"

"Of course, of course," the Doctor said. He moved toward the door and held it open. "You just go back to your work now. Everything will be all right."

Returning to his chair, the Doctor picked up the telephone and dialed. "Mr. Hopkins, please. This is the Doctor." While he waited he opened Sten's folder and frowned thoughtfully at his notes.

"Hello, G. W. How's the boy?" he inquired. "Fine, thanks . . . Yes, your Model S-10 just left. I don't think the trouble is there at all. He seems very well taped, good memory function, everything working splendidly. The obedience command is well integrated. The special loyalty reflex is very obvious. I found it rather on the effusive side. You could—I beg your pardon? . . . Well, G. W., all I can say is, if that's what you ordered, you've certainly got it.

"What? . . . I don't mean anything by that. It would just get on my nerves, that's all. Now, I dare say you'll find the difficulty in your K-80 . . . No, you don't need me for it. Don't send her here. It's a simple enough job for any competent adjuster. Your company man can handle it. Just to be on the safe side, I'd suggest deactivating it until you can get the work done. Be sure whoever throws her main switch is well insulated, though. Your S-10 indicates she's carrying a heavy

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charge right on the pseudermis, probably not lethal but enough to give somebody a nasty jolt.

"The first thing adjustment should look for is excessive regenerative feedback in the receptor circuits. That Katy must be radiating a field of forty or fifty feet—all over your offices, the anteroom, and in the S-10's work area. The field is so strong the S-10's picking up a heavy current flow by inductance and the resulting mismatch is producing a considerable amount of heat energy in it.

"Then the K-80's memory banks should be carefully checked for emotional content. There's more than a trace. Whole images of day dreams are present . . . How do I know? It's my business to know, G. W., and besides the S-10 is picking them up by shock excitation. Whoever was the original for those tapes is not a suitable subject for robotics. Tell your programming people to get another subject. This one's far too emotional.

"The frontal lobes should be checked for a breakdown somewhere in the insulation. One of the things your S-10 noted suggests there is more or less continuous arcing occurring just posterior to the K-80's photocells.

"Oh, that reminds me. Your overnight recharge is probably delivering far too much energy. The S-10 was so loaded I didn't dare let him light my pipe, even though blocking his courtesy circuits shunted the load to dangerously high levels . . .

"You're very welcome, G. W. Glad to be of service. I'll send along my written report and bill as usual."

The Doctor hung up the phone and strolled into the waiting room.

"Mr. Teeten?" he said pleasantly. "Sorry to keep you waiting. Won't you come this way?"

An overload relay popped somewhere within the robot's smooth abdomen, then snicked back as Teeten rolled docilely behind the Doctor into the consulting room, lifting each castered leg smoothly over the door sill. The Doctor sat down and picked up a fresh folder and sheet of paper. Automatically, he began to refill his pipe. Politely Teeten held out an index finger. Its tip began to glow a cherry red, then grew white hot.

"Allow me, sir," Teeten said courteously.

The Doctor glanced at the meter on Teeten's forehead. His expression did not change.

"Thank you so much," he said cordially, "but I have a match."

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mr. merman

by . . . Raymond Brossard

He shuddered. No. There'd be no headlines like that. It'd be like standing naked in Times Square! Instead he'd—

MR. MERMAN finished shaving. He always shaved before he had a bath because he generally nicked himself and lying in the bath he could let it bleed till it stopped but if he shaved afterwards the little cut would bleed and bleed and the styptic pencil, the bits of toilet paper would have no effect at all. It was annoying during the week when he had to rush to the office dabbing at his face with a handkerchief but today was Sunday and Sunday was a day of leisurely ritual. Edna generally arrived a little before ten and Mr. Merman would arise, spend a half hour in the bathroom and then have a big breakfast with many cups of coffee while he looked through the New York Sunday *Times,* carefully reading all the news and paying close attention to any new wrinkles in the advertisements, for Mr. Merman worked as a copy writer.

Rubbing the washrag over the steamy mirror he looked at himself. It was a plump, pleasant face with pale blue rather protruding eyes and two small nicks had made thin red lines running down to his neck. It must be some mild form of haemophilia, he thought, and the

A friend who read this story when still in manuscript said, "This is good, but is it SF?" Of course it isn't. It's a unique fantasy, by an extremely interesting writer and artist who has been all over the world and who was in India during the War. Watch for Brossard's stories—and his paintings!

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son of the last Czar ran through his mind as he leaned over and turned off the taps. He looked at his thin gold watch. It was ten-fifteen. Breakfast would be ready in a quarter of an hour and he was wondering what Edna would have prepared when he stepped into the bath.

Terror rushed through Mr. Merman as his feet flew out from under him and before the welling shriek could explode from his open, horrified mouth, his head struck the back of the tub and then slowly sunk beneath the water while one leg dangled outside the tub and the other rested on the hot water tap.

Mr. Merman's first sensation as he gradually regained consciousness was a burning feeling in his right foot and a throbbing ache in his head. He opened his eyes slowly to a blurry vision of his nude body strangely distorted and painfully he pulled himself erect. Water streamed out of his nose and mouth in great jets and he just sat still while his dazed wits returned to him bit by bit until they finally made a whole. What a terrifying experience! A minute more and, by God, he would have drowned!

Mr. Merman was a methodical man and he reached to the washbowl and looked at his watch. He received a stunning shock. It was twenty-five minutes after ten!

His hands were trembling as he sat back in the tub. The watch wasn't wrong, hadn't been for years. Nobody could stay underwater for ten minutes and live! He thought back to when he had first come to. A peculiar sensation ran through him as he remembered he had felt his right foot burning and a pain in his head, but no, there had been no choking feeling connected with his breathing. But it was impossible, he couldn't breathe underwater! He looked again at his watch. It was now twenty-eight minutes after ten. Perhaps he had been mistaken when he looked at his watch before the accident. But then even so there was the fact that he had had no feeling of choking. Drowning was not supposed to be unpleasant, but then, who could tell that . . . only the drowned. Suffocation couldn't be pleasant!

The more he thought about it the more he decided to try it. Immediately, of course, he would choke, get up quickly and that would be that. He would make an effort to forget the whole incident and consider himself lucky that he hadn't drowned.

Mr. Merman pulled himself together and holding his breath slid his head under the water. For a time his nerve left but finally his breath was out and he gasped. Immediately water rushed into his nose and mouth and spread warmly in his lungs. But! But there was no sensation, none at all! He was breathing underwater. At first a long stream of bubbles issued forth then ceased and Mr. Merman lay under the water, a dazed and shat-

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tered man. How could this happen to him? What did it mean? It was stupefying, incredible.

Finally he raised up and once again the water poured out of his nose and mouth and for a moment he felt out of breath. Slowly he dried himself and putting on his dressing gown went to his breakfast.

"Good morning, Mr. Merman," Edna's cheerful rich voice came reassuring to his ears. "Good morning, Edna," he replied and poured a cup of coffee with a none too steady hand.

The New York *Times* was before him. RUSSIANS EXPLODE H-BOMB. UN DECISION REJECTED. RUSSIANS SAY NO. He felt a sudden thrill that all these headlines would be of secondary importance if his unusual prowess were made public. "HUMAN FISH-MAN BREATHES UNDERWATER. Before a startled group of scientists and public officials at the Park Central swimming pool, Mr. William Merman, age 38, of this city, breathed underwater for exactly thirty minutes."

He shuddered. No! No headlines like that! He would be snapped up by Billy Rose and there would be a huge tank and goggling crowds, awful staring mobs of people. It would be like standing naked at Times Square. No, he couldn't let *anyone* know. He would keep it secret but such a secret! Mr. Merman felt the bump on the back of his head and chuckled aloud. Life was beginning to take on a much richer meaning.

After Edna left he returned to the bathroom and spent several hours underwater even managing a short snooze. Later he strolled up Fifth Avenue and went to a technicolor movie in which the star swam underwater and smiled close up to the camera. A smile, he thought contemptuously, by God, he could laugh underwater!

Until late that night he read THE SEA AROUND US, and there it was . . . Man had originally in some mysterious way sprung from the ocean, from the warm slimy ooze at its edge and now he, William Merman, was a throwback to that dim age, a sort of human modern *Nautilus*. Then a thought suddenly bothered him. The sea! Could he stand *salt* water or was it only fresh water . . . ?

The next morning Mr. Merman telephoned Duncan & Cowles. He didn't feel well, no, just a bad cold, a little rest and he'd be in the next day. He took the Brighton Express to Sandy Point. It was a lovely day with a slight ocean breeze and he walked away from the pavillion advertising shore dinners and strolled up the beach till there was nothing but dunes, the gray skeleton of an old whaleboat and some gulls shrieking overhead. He undressed, hid his clothes under the old boat and walked quickly to the sea. It was icy cold and he shivered as he slowly walked out and the waves got larger and larger until one com-

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pletely covered him and he dove underneath.

The cold water rushed into his lungs and everything was foamy and green to his eyes but he was breathing just as always. He had some difficulty with the current of the waves but soon found that if he swam close to the bottom it was much better and soon he was in deeper water where there were no waves. A school of tiny fish passed, glinting silvery from the sunlight and then shot away in alarm when they saw him. Now he was walking on the bottom, several big blue crabs scuttled away, more fish passed, a school of flounders and a large heavy fish that sluggishly moved past him with an expression of disdain. As he walked on there was a pleasant slight swaying with the current and he moved with a minimum of effort as he was as light as a feather and several times he stumbled but it was like a slow motion movie and he righted himself with the grace of a ballet dancer. His white body gleamed in the greeny depths and he walked through an undersea garden of plants that continuously undulated with the current. Then a huge shape loomed ahead. As he drew closer he could see that it was an old sunken steamer and swarms of fish played about on the decks and disappeared in the tangle of sea weed that festooned the guard rails and, with a feeling of surprise, he could actually hear it creak. As a matter of fact he could hear a lot of strange noises: gulps, barks and funny bubbly sounds. One big bloated fish passed and as its mouth opened he could hear "blub blub" like a fat man with indigestion. He heard his own laughter as he thought of the office staff and if they could see him now!

Inside the doorway it was dark with an occasional fish darting in or out and he wondered what was behind the swaying door. Summoning all his nerve he stepped through the doorway and stood in darkness. Only a row of portholes showed up, round plates of green light. He stumbled over wreckage and bumped into objects floating halfway in the cabin. He had to have light, it was too scary moving in this watery gloom and it was with relief that he went outside.

He left the ship and walked slowly back, recognizing a clump of sea fern here, an old sea anchor there. It was much lighter now and he realized that the sun must be directly overhead. Finally he felt the current of the waves and broke to the surface blinking in the bright light of the sun and the dazzling shore. There was the whale boat and he sat in the sun until he was dry and then put on his clothes. As he walked along the beach he suddenly realized the value of his secret—sunken treasure!

Mr. Merman returned to the office the next day and found it very difficult to concentrate on his work for he knew now he had the capa-

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bilities to make himself a rich man but there were so many different problems to solve.

He spent his evenings at the public library and over the weekend had long interviews with divers from the New York Salvage Corporation. It was several weeks later that he finally made his plans. First, old sunken treasure, Spanish Doubloons and the like were out—hard to discover, heavy and difficult to dispose of. Modern sunken treasure, good U. S. treasury notes were what he wanted. Two miles off Barnegat Light, in sixty fathoms lay the torpedoed *"Henry Hudson"* carrying airplane parts but also a safe containing a hundred thousand dollars. The Salvage company had had several tries at it but it was too deep and the venture given up. What he needed was a motorboat, a powerful flashlight and an underwater acetylene torch.

He asked for his summer vacation earlier than usual with some mumbled remarks from old Cowles that his work hadn't been up to standard recently. Up to standard! Soon he'd tell Cowles to go to hell. It was a week before he had everything in order. Buying accessories had been easy but it had taken the former owner of the *"Sea Spray,"* a 24-foot cabin cruiser, four days to instruct Mr. Merman in the intricacies of the engine, simple navigation and the general handling of the boat.

It was a bright June morning when Mr. Merman left his mooring in Shark River, chugged past Belmar and was seen on the open sea. He set his course and leaving the wheel fixed busied himself in the boat, checking the torch and the tanks of oxygen and gas. He studied his charts and looked at the compass, according to his rate of knots and direction he would reach the general area in an hour. He poured some coffee from the thermos and wondered why Fate had withheld his marvellous secret so long.

The boat purred through the now heavy swells and he was glad to discover he felt no nausea. He looked at his watch and in a few minutes he cut the engine and played out the anchor. First of all he would have to go down and make a reconnaissance. Now he stripped down to his shorts and looking over the water there were no boats as far as the eye could see.

It was quite dark farther down and as the light flashed on several startled fish darted away. Like moths they flickered in and around the lamp and several large ones bumped against him. It was very cold at the bottom with a pressure on his ears and a need to breathe in more water, like a man at high altitudes gulping air. The flash didn't carry too far in the water and he began to wonder about his first practical lesson in navigation when he practically bumped into the side of the sunken ship. It was lying on its side with a terrible gaping hole scored by a torpedo. De-

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bris was scattered about the ocean floor. This was it.

In a short time he surfaced and discovered his boat about a quarter of a mile distant. Leaving three corks floating on the water he swam under the surface towards it (Mr. Merman couldn't swim on top of the water). Soon the boat was anchored near the corks, and tying on the acetylene apparatus he again jumped overboard. A tremendous shark badly frightened him on his descent as it rolled in front attracted by the light. He gripped the spurting acetylene torch as an effective weapon but the fish, merely curious, swam on. Landing on the slanted deck he paused to orientate himself.

Bumping into masses of floating junk he made for the midships cabin containing the safe, groping in the obscure light towards the center of the ship. Pressing on down the corridor he again and again encountered a sickening odor of putrescence. Finally he entered a large room, one end choked with debris at the ship's slant. Raising the light to several doorways he finally saw it—"Purser." The door was locked but the torch quickly ate through the metal latch. Then it was open and there was the safe where it had fallen on the deck. The metal of this was tougher and it was a long time before the torch penetrated the bolts. Slowly, slowly he lifted it open and a large bubble burst out followed by package after package that floated quietly upwards. The money, packets of it! With nervous trembling hands he reached for and stuffed the packets into the rubber sack. Quantities of coin money lay there too but he regretfully spurned it. Now that fortune was his he wanted desperately to be rid of this ghost ship and the murky terrifying depths and be back in sunlight and reality. Cutting off the acetylene flow when once more out on deck, he hastily ascended. The tiredness was so great when he reached the *Sea Spray* that he fell on the bunk and rested for a long while before being able to move. On rising no one felt greater in the world than Mr. Merman as he started the engine and headed the *Sea Spray* back towards land.

That night any Treasury agent or T-man would have been fascinated by the interior of Mr. Merman's apartment. Festooning the living room were yards of clothesline hung with damp 10, 20, 100-dollar bills. Mr. Merman sat in an overstuffed chair drinking an unaccustomed highball and occasionally giggling aloud as he surveyed his gay green ceiling.

Next morning Messrs. Duncan and Cowles were in deep conference when Mr. Merman came in, unannounced. They glared indignantly at him. "What's the idea! What is it?" they snapped. Mr. Merman carefully put both of his hands palms down on their desk, leaned forward and, letting out a long Bronx cheer, turned slowly and walked out.

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Mr. Merman now emerged from his long hardened shell of quiet, conservative habit and swam out into a glittering stream of life. A new apartment in the East Fifties, a permanent Edna, a dashing convertible and rounds of late nights at swank night clubs. In due course appeared also various rather bosomy girls who furnished him with hitherto undreamed of delights.

Usually taciturn, he now discovered a talent for conversation, witty small talk and ability to make quick friendships long buried in the monotonous years of writing Duncan and Cowles copy. People appreciated him, especially the fast crowd that inhabited the bistros and clubs after dark; they found his easy spending, affable manner and air of mystery enjoyable on all occasions.

To Mr. Merman this carefree existence was like a wonderful and continuous New Year's Eve. Huge hangovers were cheerfully suffered by him while his rising hours grew later and later, more often than not accompanied by a strange tousled head that was either an Adele, a Bunny or a Ruthie. Edna, to his vast relief, seemed to enjoy his change of existence as much as he, and sang in the kitchen while preparing the ever necessary canape and hors d'oeuvres.

Occasionally the urge to break away for a few days would overwhelm him and at Sandy Point he would wander about on the ocean floor in great peace of spirit. He felt an affinity with the soft sand beneath his feet, the silvery swarms of curious, friendly fish and the gently swaying sea plants. It was not long after one of these ocean trips that he noticed, while in the shower, something peculiar on his lower ribs. Getting closer to the light he bent to peer more closely at his flesh. Barely visible was a series of small U-shaped marks. Shuddering he realized their significance—scales!

Mr. Merman shut himself up in his apartment and saw no one. The scales weren't increasing but he realized that if he continued the underwater jaunts there was a strong possibility of turning into—God knew what. And at the same time a check on his bank account made him aware that if he continued at his present way of life it wouldn't take much longer to exhaust the supply. This life was good and with only one more big, perfect haul he could rest content.

Several weeks later Mr. Merman anchored his boat four miles off the south Jersey shore. Below, deep below, was the *S. S. General Sherman* with over a million dollars in her safe. It was a cold, gray day and he shivered as he gripped the torch and prepared to dive. His heart pounded—a million dollars!

Then he was under and going down. The sea became darker and he flashed on the light. Never before had he been so deep. The water charged in and out of his

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lungs and a pressure enveloped his entire body so strongly that a peculiar vagueness crept over his mind. On the great depths his swimming grew more and more feeble. Finally his arms and legs refused to work but still he sank lower, lower. The pressure now was tearing him, tearing him and he couldn't rise against that awful pressure. Down, down but not up. Then Mr. Merman knew—knew that he would never rise. He was drowning. It was all over—he had gone beyond his depth. The flash slipped from his hand and he was left in utter darkness . . . singing . . .

The detective came in and saw the cop by the splintered door, the crying colored girl and the uniformed interne. "What is it, Doc?" The interne looked up from the bathtub. "D.O.A." he replied, "Concussion followed by drowning."

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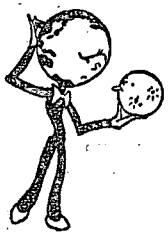

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universe in books

by . . . Hans Stefan Santesson

Comments on the new books, novels, anthologies, conventions — and other matters which may interest you. . . .

JUDITH MERRIL'S anthology, unquestionably one of the best anthologies in the field, GALAXY OF GHOULS, has now been republished as OFF THE BEATEN ORBIT (Pyramid, 35 cents). This is your opportunity to read, once more, Fritz Leiber's tribute to a myth, THE NIGHT HE CRIED, Ray Bradbury's HOMECOMING, Leslie Charteris' FISH STORY, Anthony Boucher's lovely little THE AMBASSADORS (the truth, at long last, about our friends on Mars!), William Tenn's CHILD'S PLAY, J. B. Priestley's THE DEMON KING, etc., etc. By all means get this tonight!

Ray Bradbury has, of course, become something of a legend in this field. Angus Wilson has said that, "for those who care about the future of fiction in the English language it" (THE MARTIAN CHRONICLES) "is, I believe, one of the most hopeful signs of the last twenty years." Christopher Isherwood, also writing about the same book, talks of "the sheer lift and power of a truly original imagination." And, at the same time, purists in the field have protested

Another report on some books of interest to science fiction and fantasy readers—and on science fiction fan activities and other matters which may perhaps interest you — it all reflecting the many-sided aspects of life and speculative thought in this field inadequately called science fiction.

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that this, despite the praise, is *not* science fiction.

Today Bradbury is, of course, no longer "this highly talented young writer," this moralist working in the one medium which permits you fantastic freedom and mobility. Ray Bradbury is a distinguished writer, a very successful writer, with much of the early fire subdued, and with a glossy patina laid over the occasional gesture to yesterday.

There are some sensitive and delightful stories in A MEDICINE FOR MELANCHOLY (Doubleday, $3.75), —IN A SEASON OF CALM WEATHER, A SCENT OF SARSPARILLA, and many others. And there are some smooth and beautifully polished stories. All—both the sensitive and the beautifully polished—reflect the complex qualities of the man and writer that is Ray Bradbury.

Andrew North's unfortunately titled VOODOO PLANET (Ace Double Novels, 35 cents), is an exceptionally good adventure story built around (as is the companion selection, Andrew North's PLAGUE SHIP) the adventures of young Dane Thorson, cargo master with the *Solar Queen*. In VOODOO PLANET, North has created an interesting civilization on the planet Khatka, where Thorson is witness to the fantastic duel between Lumbrilo, hereditary witch doctor of his people, and Medic Tau, the strangely talented physician of the ship.

Watch for THE WORLD, THE FLESH, AND THE DEVIL, starring Harry BELAFONTE, and don't miss it when it gets to your city!

It is going to disturb you.

And it is going to make you wonder about Tomorrow.

Members and friends of the Hydra Club (headed this year by Robert Silverberg, as Chairman, and this writer, as Vice Chairman) were guests of MGM at a special screening on March 19th, here in New York. I frankly predict that THE WORLD, THE FLESH AND THE DEVIL, based on M. P. Shiel's novel, THE PURPLE CLOUD, and starring Harry Belafonte, Inger Stevens and Mel Ferrer, will be one of the most talked about movies this year. It asks questions which it is devoutly to be hoped will never have to be answered. It will, as I said a few minutes ago, disturb you mightily.

And it will make you think!

Don't miss this movie!

Among those present, incidentally, were Arthur C. Clarke (who was leaving for Ceylon the next morning), the Hon. A. P. Venkateswaran, Consul of India in New York, Lester del Rey, William Tenn, Algis J. Budrys, David and Ruth Kyle, Sam Moskowitz, Damon Knight, Franklin and Belle C. Dietz, and World Citizen Garry Davis. And many others.

Incidentally, Kate Wilhelm's ONE FOR THE ROAD, which

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appears in this issue, was written long before the recent *Strontium-90* headlines.

We are told that John Wyndham's THE MIDWICH CUCKOOS (Ballantine Books, 35 cents) *is "a story to chill you straight to* the marrow"—"a quietly macabre novel which builds to a climax as inevitable as it is absolutely terrifying."

Perhaps so.

I don't question the sincerity of these reactions.

I just don't happen to completely agree with them.

John Wyndham's THE MIDWICH CUCKOOS *is* an ably told story, by a "witness" of most of what transpires, of a lost night in a sleepy town and the startling developments as every woman—and I do mean every one—becomes pregnant. The children, who thereupon become a part—and a very disturbing part—of the life of the community, provide, eventually, those admittedly macabre moments that have been mentioned.

What finally happens? Read the book, my friends, and wonder a little, next time you pass "that strange" child . . .

Brian Aldiss' STARSHIP (Criterion, $3.50), is the story of a doomed world which has lost contact with its universe—a doomed world, a fantastic world of warring, mutant "civilizations" that each do not realize they are being studied, and weighed in the balance, and pitied . . . Extremely interesting.

Ivar Jorgenson's unusual STARHAVEN : PLANET OF THE OUTCASTS (Ace Double Novels, 35 cents) presupposes the existence of a refuge for the "wanted" of the galaxy that defies all galactic laws, a refuge dominated by its creator, Ben Thurdon. Johnny Mantell, who finds himself in the collapse of Thurdon's world as Thurdon had known it, is an interesting man. Edmund Hamilton's THE SUN SMASHER *is the companion* volume, the story of the fight of the man who was told he was the Valkar of Katuun to save a world he did not, in his old personality, know . . . Interesting.

DEPARTMENT OF REPRINTS. Robert A. Heinlein's SIXTH COLUMN—the story of six men who stage, to quote the publishers, "an incredible revolt to free a conquered America," has again been reprinted by Signet as THE DAY AFTER TOMORROW (New American, 35 cents). I have not changed, materially, my opinion of this novel describing "America, shattered by an invasion *from Asia."—James Blish's* extremely interesting novel, THE SEEDLING STARS (originally, like the Heinlein novel, published by Gnome Press) has also just been reprinted. (New American, 35 cents). Don't miss this. —Philip K. Dick's SOLAR LOTTERY—"First

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Prize was the Earth Itself"—has just been reissued (Ace Books, 35 cents) as has veteran SF writer Clifford D. Simak's RING AROUND THE SUN (Ace Books, 35 cents).

Alan E. Nourse, author of ROCKET TO LIMBO, etc., describes the fight of twin sons against a powerful mining combine in the rather effective SCAVENGERS IN SPACE (McKay, $2.75), aimed at the teen-age audience. Recommended.

Horace Gold's THE FOURTH GALAXY READER (Doubleday, $3.95) is renewed testimony to the work done by Horace Gold in this field, over these years. Contributors include Avram Davidson, Thomas N. Scortia, Robert Sheckley and others, all known to our readers.

I have a confession to make about Brigitta Valentiner's DREAMS AND TALES (Greenwich, $2.75), which includes a number of the author's excursions into abstract fantasy.

I was confused.

Apropos of Ufology, we have an interesting article coming up in the next issue. Marla Baxter, the wife of Howard Menger, author of the forthcoming FROM OUTER SPACE TO YOU (Saucerian Publications, $4.50) and one of the most discussed personalities in the field, describes an experience her husband had, last fall, in LIFE FORM FROM OUTER SPACE. Publication of this article does not, of course, imply endorsal of the statements made by either Howard Menger or by his wife, but I do feel—and I think many of you will agree with me—that Marla Baxter has an interesting story to tell.

The *Detention* Committee has announced that Poul Anderson will be Guest of Honor at the 17th World Science Fiction Convention. Also scheduled for the *Detention* program, since we last heard from Detroit, is a panel of fan-magazine publishers including Terry Carr (*Fanac*), F. M. Busby (*Cry of the Nameless*), Dean Grennell (*Grue*), Ted White (*Stellar*) and Bjo Wells (*Mimsy*) as moderator. Another panel being planned will feature fans who have become professionals, Bob Silverberg, Bob Tucker, Marion Zimmer Bradley, and others.

Detention, as we've said before, meets Labor Day Week End (September 4th through the 7th) at the Pick-Fort Shelby Hotel in Detroit, Michigan. Anyone interested in joining Detention should send their $2 membership fee (overseas memberships are $1) or write for more information to *Detention,* 12011 Kilbourne, Detroit 13, Michigan.

Further out West, *Fantastic Universe* reader Edward Wood, writing from Idaho Falls, Idaho, comments

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on the protest of a local reader that she has found little in science fiction to talk about.

"Science fiction fandom suffers badly from a lack of the 'true believers'," agrees Mr. Wood. "The fanaticism so characteristic of fandom during and before the second World War is gone. Partially because fans lost contact with science fiction and went over to this fandom-is-a-way-of-life thing in which fandom thought only of fandom; partially because of the hankering of the professional magazines for borderline topics such as flying saucers, shaverism, dianetics, etc. etc.; partially because of the vast expansion of science fiction into so many other media; partially because the old fans necessarily lost their objectivity and respect for science fiction when they turned professional writer, editor or what have you." (*I disagree vehemently with that last point, my friend.*)

"We 'happy few' who believe in the enormous potentiality of science fiction, continue to learn, study and enjoy science fiction as it is in these times," he adds, rather glumly. "Perhaps Mr. Harrison will understand." (*Harry Harrison had commented, in the same issue, on a recent meeting in Philadelphia*) "when we say that our only sin has been that 'We were too few'."

In the meantime, the Futurians, a local science fiction fan group grimly determined not to be ignored, have been meeting at the "Nunnery," in Cooper Square. (That's right, it *isn't* a Nunnery . . .). The speaker at their February meeting was to give a demonstration of "Black Magic (NOT for real, for FUN) including a Mass of St. Secaire. This mass if done seriously (which it will not be) is supposed to cause the person against whom it is said to wither away to nothing," to quote the invitation. An election was to be held "to determine the person most in need of withering away." No Futurian was eligible. —And a distinguished fantasy writer was to speak at their March meeting on "I have come—not to praise Science Fiction—but to bury it!"

Hmmm . . .

I commented some time ago, in my review of George Hunt Williamson and John McCoy's UFO CONFIDENTIAL (pp. 111-112, Jan. 1959 *F.U.*), on Williamson's disturbing endorsal, in this book, of a book reflecting a point of view that I am afraid I feel has no place in Ufological circles.

Rabbi Y. N. ibn Aharon, in an article on "Saucerian Fascism and Spaceship Spiritualism," in the March, 1959 issue of his *Journal of Correlative Philosophy*, comments at some length on this disturbing development which he feels is "strongly reminiscent of the psychic fascist movements of the thirties." We are tired of being reminded, he says, that the principles of Jefferson, the sagacity of

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Ben Franklin, the cosmopolitan breath of the 18th century, and the anarchism of Tom Paine, are scenes which we can now survey only with recurrent nostalgia. As a people, today, we "want all-knowingness without the hard work which is the price of more intellectual achievement."

And here, he suggests, is where these carpet-baggers in saucerdom enter the picture.

Frankly, I do not agree completely with some of the points Rabbi ibn Aharon makes in his article, (I understand offprints will be available), but I do share his distress at the possibility that some of these ideas—these unfortunate ideas—should once more be gaining credence. It's possibly naive of me to feel this way, but I do not see why we must carry with us into this Space Age the fears and the doubts which have been the cross that past generations have had to carry!

Perhaps this is as good a time as any to mention that Major General William Dick, Jr., Army special weapons chief, was apparently asked recently at a house hearing if he had any information backing up Flying Saucer reports.

United Press quotes him as replying, —"I answer that question with fear and trepidation, because my wife believes in flying saucers."

He didn't.

The Disclave, announced by the Washington Science Fiction Association for May 16th, has been postponed, due to a late cancellation by the Arva Motel where the Disclave was to have been held. Contact Bob Pavlat, at 6001 43rd Avenue, Hyattsville, Md., for further information.

As we went to press, The Lunarians, here in New York, were announcing that they had chosen Lester del Rey as this year's guest of honor at their LunaCon on April 12th. Also scheduled for the program were brief addresses by Judith Merril, Avram Davidson, Harry Harrison, Garry Davis, and others, and an Ed Emsh film was to be shown.

Washington in 1960? Of course!

A thousand people attended Civilian Saucer Intelligence's meeting at the Hotel Diplomat here in New York, Friday evening, March 27th (announced in the last issue) to hear and see "Long John" Nebel, Major Donald Keyhoe, *Fantastic Universe* author Lester del Rey, and many others, at what was undisputably the best attended meeting dealing with this subject, held in this area. Readers of this magazine will remember CSI's many authoritative articles on Ufological matters in past issues.

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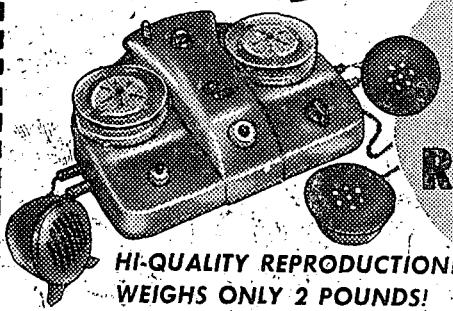

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